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WARDEN OF SACKVILLE COLLEGE.

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N425
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LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
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Dedicated

WITH MUCH AFFECTION

TO

Those Children

WHO HEARD THESE READINGS FROM THE LIPS OF

THE AUTHOR.

MAY THEY NEVER LOSE THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE

THE HUMBLE AND CHILDLIKE SPIRIT

WHICH HE

HERE SETS BEFORE THEM.

E097

PREFACE.

It would never have entered into my mind to publish a Second Series of these Sermonets, had it not been that by so many of those who have had to do with children, I have been asked for it, in a way which ought to make me very thankful that my former poor little book has been found useful.

J. M. N.

Sackville College, East Grinsted.
April 20th, 1866.

NOTICE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is with much thankfulness to the Great Head of the Church, Whose servant the Author ever strove to be, that the Second Edition of *the S. Margaret's Readings* is published. This re-issue has been carefully revised, and five new sermons have been added: to distinguish these an *asterisk* has been prefixed at the commencement of each.

Feast of S. Margaret, 1869.

INTRODUCTION.

It was contemplated by the revered Author of the following *Readings* to publish them some time before his removal from his work to his rest; and had he done so, they would probably have had the advantage of a few final corrections and additions from his own hand. As it is, they are now given to the Church's little ones just as he left them, with all the local and personal allusions preserved, sometimes the very names of those to whom he was speaking being retained.

It is believed that this little book strikingly exhibits the peculiar gift which Dr. Neale had received from the Giver of all good gifts, of throwing his entire energies into whatever work he might have in hand. Those learned men who, in all parts of the Church, Eastern as

well as Western, were astonished at the rapidity with which volumes of Church History, Theological Essays, Controversial Pamphlets and Tracts of one kind or another, issued from his prolific pen, perhaps little imagined that this great scholar and divine—the linguist who had mastered more than twenty languages—was spending a considerable part of every day in a loving care for the tender lambs of Christ's flock; taking thought for each one individually; writing Sermons, Lectures, Hymns, and Carols for their amusement, warning, and instruction. With him, indeed, was ever present that injunction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

No doubt, ere long, a complete List of Dr. Neale's works will be made. It may be useful, however, to many to enumerate here, as far as possible, those which were written especially for the young. They are as follows: A History of England for Children; A Church History for Children; Annals of Virgin Saints; Tales of Christian Heroism; Tales of Christian Endurance; Deeds of Faith; Victories of the

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J. H.

East Barkwith Rectory
Septuagesima, 1867.

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S. MARGARET'S READINGS.

READING I.*

"Buy the truth, and sell it not." PROV. xxiii. 23.

TO-MORROW, as you know, is the fair here. Nothing will be talked about but buying and selling; one as much as the other. So now, I think you shall hear about something that you, that we all, are to buy: but never, let what may happen, to sell: "Buy the truth, and sell it not."

Now, the first question that comes into one's mind when one reads the verse, is that very question which Pilate asked, but of which he never waited to hear the answer, "What is truth?" But our Lord gives you the answer Himself: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." When I ask the little ones here their Catechism, it is wonderful to think how the very wisest men who lived in heathen times would have given all they had, their very life itself, to have known what one of those poor little mites could tell them. They went groping

* Preached at S. Margaret's Orphanage, the Third Sunday in Advent, 1859.

about after the truth all their lives, sometimes nearer to it, sometimes further off from it; and some of them thought that after this life there was another, and that the soul does not die like the body, and that there is a God who will reward the good and punish the bad. But this never came into the mind of any, not even of the wisest of them; that God Himself should be born in this world as a Baby, that He might bring mankind to Himself; that He should come and live in our houses here, to the end that we, some day, should go and live with Him there; that He should pass a whole life in this world, a very sad and sorrowful life, having often nowhere to lay His head, often weary, often hungry, often thirsty; and that at last He should be betrayed by one of those whom, so far as He was Man, He trusted—betrayed with a kiss, and so nailed to the Cross, that He might die for us.

Well, then, our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the Truth: and Solomon tells us here that we are to buy Him. How can this be? We know that in many places we are told how He gives Himself to us: how He gave Himself on the Cross, to be the payment for our sins: how He gives Himself on the Altar, as I hope in time He will to all of you, my children, to be the Food that keeps our souls alive, just as the meat that we eat keeps our bodies alive. It is very true, He does give

Himself to us, and yet we are to buy Him. It is just what is written in Isaiah: "Yea, come; buy wine and milk without money and without price." And it means this! that, though He does thus give us Himself, yet it is not without our doing what we can on our parts, without our obeying what He commands us. When we talk about buying and selling, we mean that what we give is worth what we receive. But what have we, or can we have, that is worth the Truth here, that is worth, if I may say so, God Himself? When we speak about buying the Truth, we mean that we must give something for it: and the question is, "What is that something?" You know the Parable of the Merchantman seeking goodly pearls. And when he had found one pearl of great price, he gave—what for it? Why, he went and sold all that he had, and bought that pearl. So now, my children, here is the plain truth. If the Holy Ghost had not said it, I should not venture to say so myself. But He has, and therefore I may say it too; what you want is,—it is the only thing worth wanting in this world, it is the only thing worth trying for,—that our Lord Jesus Christ should belong to you, should belong to you as something that is your own. And think what that is: you, poor, weak, ignorant children, and He the Almighty God. Nevertheless He will belong to you; only it must be on one condition. You must give Him

all you have. Now the utmost we can give to any one is ourselves, that is. all the powers of our souls and of our bodies: not sometimes only; not for some hours in the day only; but always, wherever you are, and whatever you are doing. This is the price you have to pay for that pearl. And see how much it costs. When you are doing your lessons, it means that you should work as diligently as you can for His sake; when you are at play, you should be as kind as you can to your playfellows for His sake also; when you are here in the Oratory, you should drive away every other thought, and say with Jacob: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven." It means that the first thing in the morning you should try to remember you are little Christians, having your Lord and God, Himself once a Baby, to please; having a dear Angel to help you to please Him; having the devil to fight against, who is your enemy as well as His. It means that when you lie down at night, you should be afraid to go to sleep if you know that you have one sin in your mind that you have not been sorry for; much more if there is one sin that you mean to be guilty of, if ever you shall have the opportunity. It means that, whether you eat or drink, you should do it, as S. Paul says, to the glory of God: that you should remember Who has taken you, like poor little lambs

out of a great wide, wild waste common, and put you in here into a fold, where you are safe from so much danger and sin. It means that when you dress and undress, you should remember that as you then put off and put on your clothes, so some day you will have to put off this body that you now have, and that it depends on how you have been living here, whether you put it on again, far more glorious and beautiful than ever it was; or whether you wake up at the Judgment-day, to that which Daniel calls "shame and everlasting contempt," to that which our Lord speaks of as "the resurrection of damnation."

Yes, my children, believe me, it is no easy thing to any one to buy the Truth. All I can say is: It is not so difficult to you as it is to some. But then, remember that the easier God's goodness has made it to you, the more He will expect from you.

But this is only half the text. "Buy the truth, and sell it not." What does that mean, selling the truth? It means giving up that which we know to be right for some pleasure or advantage in this world. It was because they would not sell the Truth that the Martyrs, of whom you have heard so much, laid down their lives. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

of whom the world was not worthy." Now it is not likely that any of you will ever be tempted thus to sell the Truth. But I will tell you a story that I heard the other day when I was away from you. I was being shown over a very large school; and among other places I was taken to see, was the great bedroom—dormitory, as they call it—where as many as eighty boys sleep in beds side by side, like yours. Now it is the custom that before they go to bed, they should all kneel down and say their prayers; and it is a rule that there should be silence kept for a certain time in order that they may. But, about twenty years ago, out of all those eighty boys, not one ever said any prayers. They were ashamed to seem to have any religion, and so they used to go to bed every night as heathens might have done. But about that time, there went to that school a boy, not more than eleven or twelve years old, not strong in his health, and rather backward in his learning. The first night he slept in this room, he looked round to see if any were going to say their prayers or not; and he found that first one and then another got into bed without any thought of them. Then it came into his head, that after all he might just as well say them in bed too: that if one prays with all one's heart, it does not matter whether we kneel down or no. But then again he remembered what our Lord says, "Whosoever therefore shall deny Me before men,

him will I also deny before My Father Which is in heaven." And so, after a great struggle with himself, he took courage and knelt down. Then there arose such a noise and outcry, such a hooting and howling, as might well have frightened a brave man, much more a poor weak boy. And so it went on night after night; as soon as he knelt down, there was the same noise; shoes and slippers and everything that the others could lay their hands on were thrown at him; and wherever he went he was mocked and reviled. But by degrees, first one and then another of the better sort of boys began to think that there must be something in it: began to take his part and defend him, and at last to follow his example and kneel down themselves. And so it came to pass by degrees, that the Truth in this one boy overcame a whole schoolful of iniquity. He had bought the Truth at home, and he would not sell it when he came to school. He did not live very long: and I saw his monument in the chapel of that school. But this I am very sure of, that of all things that are called glorious now, great victories, great conquests, great overcoming of difficulties, this is one of the most truly glorious. And something of this kind, any one of you, my children, may have to do by and by. If you go out to service, and the first night you are in your new place you find that the fellow-servant with whom you have to sleep has no thought of

such a thing as prayer, I wonder if you would be ashamed of kneeling down, whether you were laughed at or not? If you should be, then I hope that God will give you grace to think of what I have said now, and to determine that you will not sell the Truth because of ridicule.

"Buy the Truth, and sell it not." Every temptation is only a persuasion to sell it. The devil says, If you will give me up this or that good habit or good resolution, I will give you this or that pleasure. And you remember how S. Paul sets forth Moses, when he was come to years, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. And I can wish nothing better for you all than that: that you should esteem the reproach of Christ—that is, the reproaches which others cast at you for the sake of Christ—greater riches than anything which this world can offer you. "Buy the Truth, and sell it not:" and then, some day, if you persevere, you will be taken to the House of Him Who is the perfect Truth, and where there is nothing but truth and beauty.

READING II.*

"And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." S. MATT. xxv. 15.

THIS Parable, you know, immediately follows that of the Ten Virgins. There, the virgins are represented as waiting for their Lord; here, the servants as working for Him. And the order is meant to teach us this; that it is no use trying to work for Christ among others, unless we are waiting for Him in our own hearts.

We must always take this Parable, and that of the Ten Pounds in S. Luke together. They are not only different in themselves, but they were spoken at different times, and to different sets of persons. S. Luke's was delivered in our dear Lord's last going up to Jerusalem, but before His entry into the city on Palm Sunday; and it was spoken to the multitude, "because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear:" the Apostles probably thought so themselves. No; that Kingdom would come, would come gloriously at last; but many a long century had first to pass by,

* Preached at S. Margaret's, to the Girls of S. Agnes' School, the Third Sunday in Advent, 1863.

many a suffering to be borne, many a brave act of love to be done by the Church first. And the servants were not to sit idly waiting their Lord's return. His command, His parting command, to His servants is exactly what He says to all of you now, "Occupy till I come." Make the best use of all the powers, all the advantages, all the help I give you, while I am absent, that so, at my return, I may receive Mine own with usury, and you may inherit the Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

The other Parable was spoken to the Apostles, and to them alone, while He sat on the Mount of Olives on the Tuesday in Holy Week. We shall hear more about this presently.

"Unto one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability." You know, my children, that that is true of you. One never can go into a school of any kind, one can never hear an examination of any kind, without being reminded of this Parable. Some of you are cleverer than others; some of you have had greater advantages before you came here; some of you have better health and more strength. And one other talent God, who foresees all things, has given to each one of you differently, —though how, and how differently, we shall not know in this world,—I mean, longer or shorter life. But be your talents more or less, still it is "Occupy till I come." I hope that

some of you, at all events, have been trying to keep that in mind during the last half year: that you have been trying to do your best in your lessons of whatever kind; that, when you go out into life, you may be able to do Him the better service Who may come at any moment, and Who certainly will come at last. Then it matters comparatively little who has the five talents, who the two, who the one. Whichever of you it may be that has the one, I earnestly pray that, when her Lord calls her, that beautiful verse of one of our poets may be true of her:—

> "His virtues walked their narrow round,
> Nor missed a space, nor left a void;
> And sure the Eternal Master found
> The single talent well employed."

S. Philip, the slowest of all the Apostles, will sit on one of the Twelve Thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, no less than S. Paul, the ablest of them.

The other day, two Saints were canonised together: one a Queen, and not only a Queen, but reckoned the most beautiful woman of her time, and with talents that very few women ever surpassed: the other, in the very same city, a poor diseased cripple lad, one mass of sores, from his birth, from head to foot, who never left the public hospital till within a few weeks of his death, and who could neither write nor read. What they were here does not much matter now, does it?

But notice that, in S. Luke, they all receive the same. So the two Parables put together teach two different lessons, which could not so well be taught in one story only: that of the Talents, that, as our dear Lord has given us, so He will expect from us, that to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: that of the Pounds, that, of the same powers, different persons, even among God's true servants, will make, some more, some less, use; and that he who makes the most of what he has here, shall have the higher reward there. "One star," you know, "differeth from another star in glory."

See something else. Why, in one Parable do we read of Talents, in another of Pounds? A talent of silver was worth two hundred and forty-three of our pounds. A pound of silver was worth four of our pounds. The difference between what the first servant received in S. Matthew, and all in S. Luke, is therefore enormous: the one had £1215, the others only £4. Now, as we saw just now, the Parable of the Talents was spoken to those Apostles on whom He bestowed greater graces and gifts than on any other of His servants: to them, therefore, he speaks of talents. The Parable of the Pounds was spoken to the common multitude, to whom He had given His common gifts only: and to them he therefore speaks of pounds.

The next thing is, that the Lord of those

servants straightway took his journey. Here the Parable does not keep quite close to the order of things. The Lord first, you see, gives his gifts and then departs; our Master first departed on Ascension-day, before He sent down His gifts on Whitsun Day.

In S. Luke, where the Master was a nobleman, gone to receive for himself a Kingdom, we have something else. His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Now, we may sometimes learn a great truth from the writings of a wicked man. A certain infidel, trying to turn the parable into ridicule, says: "Why, what a fool this nobleman must have been, if he was in such danger from his fellow-citizens, to give his servants pounds, instead of swords!" Exactly. That is the way in which the world looks at the question. That was the way S. Peter looked at it before the day of Pentecost, when he drew his sword, and smote the High Priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. But we know, or ought to know, that it is still, quiet work that our Master chiefly demands from us. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Well; two of the servants went and traded with their Lord's money. Let us leave them for the present to what, we all know it, must be a work of time: to their being instant in season, and out of season; to their ever re-

membering that great and strict account that they would some day have to render. Now, as to him that had received the one Talent. Take the two Parables together. The one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money: the other laid it up in a napkin. In the first place, this beautifully comes in with the story. A talent was far too large a mass of silver to be concealed in a napkin. If it were to be hidden at all, it could only be so hidden by being buried. But there is a far deeper meaning than this. The talent was hidden in the earth, that is, the gifts God gives such and such a man are employed about the things of this earth: the cares of this world, and deceitfulness of riches, to quote our dear Lord's words in another place. But the pound was delicately, softly laid up in a napkin. And this refers more precisely to that which is so common a temptation to girls. S. Paul says to S. Timothy, "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Now, when any of you allow yourselves to lie in bed to the very last moment, because it is so very comfortable, thereby perhaps giving up altogether, or anyhow shortening, your morning prayers; if any of you, in the winter, when the time has come for some active duty, won't get away from lingering over the fire, because, you know, it is so very cold; if any of you, engaged in reading a story, won't lay it aside at the exact

time, because "anyhow, I'll just finish this chapter;" this is not enduring hardness, this is laying up your pound in a napkin. And yet notice, that the account of the servant went far beyond this. By reason of the frailty of our mortal nature, we cannot always stand upright. He did not, just now and then, lay that pound aside. His own words were, "Lord, behold, here is Thy Pound which I have *kept*."

It goes on: "After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." Ah, my children, I know well how, at your age, if you could be assured that your lives would attain the threescore and ten, what an enormous length of time that would seem. I remember how it appeared so to me. But now that I am more than half-way between the age of the oldest of you, and the seventy years, you can hardly believe how short all the past seems. But, long or short, at last "the Lord of those servants cometh."

And see this: the two faithful servants go out, as it were, to meet Him. This is what S. John means, where he says, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment." This is what S. John's blessed Master means, when He says, as we have so lately heard, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

And next compare the speech of the servants

as given in S. Matthew with that in S. Luke. In S. Matthew it is, "Behold I have gained." In S. Luke, "Lord, Thy Pound hath gained." Is not this exactly what S. Paul tells us, where he says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me?"

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." It has been very beautifully said that here on earth, when we are happiest, joy enters into us, as wine into a glass or bottle: there we shall enter into joy, as a ship into the boundless sea.

Then hanging back to the last, comes the slothful servant. And he begins with an excuse: "Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where Thou hast not strawed." Let us first understand his words. The first part, "reaping where Thou hast not sown," is clear enough. The last means this: gathering in the grain on the barn floor, which Thou hadst not winnowed out. See how he not only tries to excuse himself, but throws the blame on his Lord. Was it not so in the first excuse ever made in the world? "Hast thou eaten of the tree?" Adam not only throws the blame on his wife, "The woman gave me of the tree;" but he casts it partly on God, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me:" as much as to say, If Thou hadst not given me Eve, I should not have fallen into this sin.

"Lo, there Thou hast that is Thine." Nay, not so. His Lord had indeed what once was His; but not what ought to have been His now. All that that talent might have brought him in, was due to him exactly as much as that first original talent. But it is much more than so. It could scarcely have been taught in this Parable; but we know how true it is. In the dreadful Day of Judgment, no man will be able to say, "These, Lord, are my talents. It is true, I have done no good with them; but neither have I done any harm." If you have not done good, you must have done harm. Our Christian life is not like ascending a mountain, where, if you sit down to rest, though certainly you are not getting on, neither are you going back. No: it is like a man rowing on a swift stream, and *against* the stream. If he leans on his oars, he does not make way manifestly. But is that all? No; he is drifting down.

There is an Eastern allegory which sets out this truth very beautifully. A man, who was about to take a long journey, had two sacks of corn. He gave them into the charge of two friends,—one to one, one to the other,—requesting these friends to take care of them for him. In due time he came back. Going to the first friend, he said, "Where is my corn?" "All safe," he answers; "I tied up the mouth of the sack, and put it in a cellar. Take it again." It was brought out and opened; and

there it was, mildewed, rotten, and utterly worthless. He went to the second; "Where is my corn?" "Come out with me, and I will show you." He took the man into a field all waving with golden wheat: "*There* is your corn." Then said the owner to the first friend, "Take your reward; the sack of mildewed wheat you gave to me:" to the second, "Give me back one sack of corn when the grain is thrashed out, and all the rest is your own."

Now hear the Lord's answer; "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Wicked, because he had slandered his Lord; slothful, plainly. But where it goes on, "Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:" we must not for one moment think that the Lord allowed the truth of what had been laid to his charge. No; it is as though he said: Be it so; suppose I were the hard man, reaping where I have not sown, "thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." Now here, my children, we have a great truth. We all know that Confession is a Sacrament of which the chief end is, that by the mouth of a miserable Priest, yet none the less Christ's Vicegerent, His faithful people, if they truly repent, may not only believe, but know, that they are forgiven. But there are other, lesser, uses. Here the Lord says, If you did not know what to do with your Talent, how

to lay it out to the best advantage, there are many exchangers to tell you. And so, when you do not know how best to employ what God has given you, you can scarcely do better, even in that point of view, than ask those who must hundreds of times have heard the same difficulties, been witnesses of the same fight, felt the same trials.

"Take therefore the Talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten Talents."

And here is a great lesson. It always must be that they who have the one Talent, like ourselves, far outnumber those who have the five. Therefore, more of us will fail to employ that Talent well, than those who have more. That, no doubt, is why our Lord makes the servant to whom least was intrusted to fail most.

And one thing more. Once again, look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins. Those who were shut out among them, were shut out through over-confidence. This miserable servant was shut out through over-fear. To them I should have said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." To him I should have said, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest."

And now, one last word. Remember that at your several homes you have God's work equally to do, as when here. Several of you have

younger brothers and sisters to influence for good; most of you have one or both parents to be Christian daughters to. Whatever you do as girls now, is only preparing the way for your work, should God spare you, as women. Now then in keeping watch over yourselves, in patience, in obligingness, in modesty, and last in order, but first in place, in your own prayers, try so to behave that those around you may do as it is recorded of the elders in the Acts, "they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

And now, &c.

READING III.*

"I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." S. JOHN xvii. 15.

My children, I want to speak to you all about these sad things that have happened here lately: things that would be sad anywhere, but are much more sad in a place like this. And it may show you how much I think about it, how much we all think about it (for I know that I am speaking for the Sisters as well as for myself), when you remember where the text that I just read you is taken from. It is taken from the saddest and dearest prayer that ever was made in the world: the prayer that our dear Lord offered up in the Garden of Gethsemane, after He had suffered His agony, and just before Judas Iscariot came to take Him.

Now see, my children, no man ever so loved his friends as our Lord loved His Apostles, n He called His friends. And yet, just re He was taken away, when He told them ll His love, when He knew how sad they , when He promised them that the Holy ost should come down on them very soon, also told them what He would *not* do for

To the Girls of S. Margaret's Orphanage, Advent, 1863.

them: "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil." By taking them out of the world, our Lord means, keeping them from temptation; that He would not pray for: but what He did pray for was, that they might be kept from falling.

Now, my children, in a house like this, it needs must be, as our Lord said, sometimes that offences come; that some one, or two, or more try to lead the rest of you into sin: sometimes into very deadly sin. Now the greater part of you are weak enough, too sadly led into wrong, and that easily: but I think, I hope, anyhow I *hope* that I may hope, that you would not wilfully and knowingly do the devil's work, and try to lead others wrong.

You know very well that, whatever care we may try to take of you, we cannot keep you from seeing, from knowing, from hearing, evil. And if we could, would it be real love to you? If you could be so kept to the end of your lives; yes, it would. But having to go out into the world, as you will almost all have to do, I do not think so. God, Who loves us all so dearly, never acts with us so. It might have pleased Him, when He made Adam, and set Him in Paradise, to have put all temptation out of his way. Did God so do? You know better. He left one thing that might be a temptation: the fruit that was not to be eaten. So, when

He brought His people the Jews into the land of Canaan, He might, if He had pleased, have destroyed those seven wicked nations before ever the children of Israel came into the land. But He did not please, He left His people to fight for the land first; and then some remains of those old wicked nations were left, as God Himself said, to prove His children, whether they would walk in His laws or not.

Look at it in this way. Suppose (it is very easily supposed) that any one of you children had one of the Sisters who was her especial pet, whom she loved with all her heart and soul, whom she would do anything to serve. Suppose, too, that that Sister had the whole management of her, and could arrange everything that she had to do. Would she like that Sister to say, I wonder, "I know that you love me dearly, and therefore I shall never let you take any trouble for me; I shall never let you do anything you dislike because it would please me?" Would you thank her for such a proof of her love? Would you not rather say, "Why, it is because she may love me, but she cannot trust me?" And would you not a thousand times rather have her tell you, "Such and such a thing I know you very much dislike, but it is the very thing I want you to do?" My children, would you not, as they say, jump at it?

And in the same way, that dear Lord, Who was Himself tempted for our sakes, orders that

you must, somewhere, if not here, then in future life, be tempted for His sake.

My children, now I am going to say what I mind at least as much saying, as you can mind hearing. But, when I am presently going to speak to you against being cowards, I will not, God helping me, be a coward myself.

Now, ought not this so to be? That any two of you, that any one of you, should be able to be trusted to go down to S. Agnes', behaving steadily, modestly, recollectedly, as Christian girls and Christian children ought to do? *Can* you all be? Is it not a sad thing to believe that any servant-girl, taken out of any respectable house in the town, I could trust more than, in that way, I could trust some of you?

Ought it not so to be, that, when the Sisters are not with you, one should feel as sure that none of you were half-out in the street, or wholly out, and chattering, with those who, believe me, only despise you because you do so? Would not that be a glorious thing, (indeed, my children, I would suffer almost anything for it), if, suppose it were said to me, as it has been said, "I heard of one of the S. Margaret's children talking yesterday evening with some boy in the streets;" I should be able to answer, "It is either a mistake on your part, or a falsehood on the part of whoever told you; and I shall not even ask about it!"

Could I do that now?

Several of you, I dare say, have known what it is to have some burn, or cut, or sore place, which you could not bear even to have any one seem to touch. *That* is my sore place. Ah, my children, that I should have to say so! But if I hear that some one has so behaved as I have said, could I turn round and say, "I *know* it is not true?" and, unless I could, must I not feel that sore place? Mind; some very few of you I could and do so feel about; I trust them fully, thoroughly, with my whole heart; I should trust them against all appearances, and under all that might happen. But why should not that be true of all?

Now, I have been speaking to you of being tempted. Now comes a sadder question. If it be so sad to yield to temptations, what must it be to tempt? What is it to teach sin to those weaker, younger, and looking up to you? It is doing the devil's work. It is! and this is the very truth, it may be doing more than his work.

No doubt, in all temptations that have to do with our souls alone, the devil, who is only a spirit, knows much better than we could do how to tempt us. He knows better how to make any one proud, angry, envious, lying, than the most wicked man on earth could do. But when it comes to temptations which have to do with our bodies as well as our souls, then it is different. Satan never had a body. Then he

can make use of those who are serving him, to do what he could not so thoroughly do of himself. And so (mark me, my children, for it is the very truth), any one who teaches another a sin of impurity (how much more a poor innocent little child), makes herself for that time, if not worse, a more true enemy, however, than the devil himself.

And now, one word for you older girls. I was just now speaking about cowardice. Now, God forbid I should wish any of you to become tell-tales. Nothing can be meaner, nothing can be more cowardly than this: to sit by and watch a wrong thing, not trying, not even protesting, against it; and then to go and tell of what you might have hindered.

But there is great cowardice, too, in the fear of being called a tell-tale.

That is what I mean.

If any of you, you who ought to, and must, lead others, know that anything wrong is intended, or see it begun, this is what you ought to say, "This shall not be. If it is, I shall speak of it. I give you fair warning." That is not telling tales. That is true courage. And from my heart I should honour (so we should all) any girl who did this; and all the more, if she did it knowing that she should be called a spy, or mean, or any other title of contempt.

Think of two things. First: where, in the

Revelation, the *fearful* are put. It is with liars and murderers, and the worst of sinners.

Then, what is the blessing of those that are strong: strong and very courageous, valiant for truth.

My children, God give you grace all so to be for Jesus Christ's sake.

And now &c.

READING IV.*

"Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24.

Of all the Apostles, S. Paul seems to have been the most fond of comparing our Christian life to a struggle: as you all know that he speaks more clearly and strongly about the battles with temptations that we all have to fight, where he says, "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." And here you see how also he speaks to the Corinthians; how he compares those games of ancient Greece to our battles, their races to our race. And there was good reason why he should write to them so, rather than to any other Church. One of the most celebrated of all those sets of games, the Isthmian, was held not more than four miles from Corinth. Very likely S. Paul had seen them himself. They happened every two years: and he was once a full two years at Corinth. And as they must therefore have happened while he was there, it is hardly likely that he would have missed such an opportunity of preaching the Gospel when all the principal men of Greece were collected in one place: he who afterwards said to Timothy, "Preach the

* To the Girls of S. Agnes' School, December 18, 1864.

word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."

Now, in saying "So run," he is only meaning what he says even more plainly to that same Timothy, "If a man also strive for masteries yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." And there he is referring to certain rules for those games, from which we also may learn a great deal. Firstly, all that tried must be pure Greeks both by father and mother. Next, certain offences hindered their trying at all. Next, they were obliged to be in training ten months. Next, during the time of that training, they were obliged only to eat what the trainers allowed, to keep under their bodies and bring them into subjection.

Is it not wonderfully like ourselves? If we are really running in a Christian Race, we know, in the first place, how we must be born in Baptism, or we shall have no power to run at all; then we must be always on our guard against those sins to which Satan is always tempting us, or again, we have no power to run; then we must be trained, and that not for ten months only, but for as many months or years as God may give us: trained by Him in any way that He pleases, in little crosses certainly, in doing what we would far rather not do, in leaving undone what we should dearly like to do; it may be also, in greater things, in

real troubles, in downright suffering. That is in His hands, not in ours. And then also, remember how strict those old rules were, as I said, about food and exercise. In like manner we know that we must do what S. Paul tells us he did, "keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection." Half the temptations that attack the soul come through the body: therefore all the more need that we watch over the one as well as the other.

You will see that I have been thinking about your examination last week, which also might be compared to a race. But then, here is the difference between trying for a corruptible and an incorruptible crown. There can be but a few at most that attain the earthly prize: every one may attain the heavenly. And when we see how hard men will try for the one, ought it not to make us ashamed how little we try for the other? I have known men at Cambridge who, for the sake of being the first men of their year, have deliberately ruined their health for life. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown. If they think little of life given up for a mere poor earthly honour, that will soon be forgotten, are we to think so much of any struggle, any trial, any hard work in our race, that race where we all may run, if we will run?

Yes; this I want you all to feel, and I say it the more earnestly to those one or two whom probably after to-morrow I shall never see again

in this world: that when your life, that life deep down in your hearts, that life of which from some of you I hear something in Confession, that when that life ceases to be a battle, when it is not a race, and sometimes a hard race, it is not the life to which the Kingdom of Heaven is promised. And as each in her turn, you go out into the world, whatever it may have pleased God to appoint for you,—happiness, if it be His will, in this world,—happiness, because it is His will, in the next, for all; try always to have, while you live, that text near to your heart: "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." Do *it?* Do *what?* Why, they bear so much, they exercise so much, they obey so well. Do you not think that a crown of parsley leaves is easier to come by than the Crown of Righteousness?

Yes: try then that in your whole future course this Crown may be before your eyes. Then, I know, if from time to time we all hear of you here, it will be a dear pleasure to be able to say what S. John said to the Elect Lady: "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth."

But what will that be to the joy hereafter, if God shall give us grace to enter into His Kingdom, of welcoming each of you, as one by one you join us there, no single lamb lost, no single racer defeated, no single one now here in this Oratory missing in the Eternal Temple!

And now, &c.

READING V.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants." S. MATT. xviii. 23.

THEREFORE; and so we have to look back and see why S. Peter had come to our Lord and had asked him: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" And if it seems strange to us, his thinking that seven times was so often to forgive, you must know that the Jews thought this: If a man offended his neighbour three times, his neighbour was bound to pardon him; the fourth time there was no longer any duty of forgiving him. So at all events S. Peter, even then, long before the Holy Ghost had come down upon the Apostles, felt that the law of our dear Lord was a law of love, far beyond anything that was written in the law of Moses. Therefore: because of this question, our Lord tells us this story: "The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a certain King, which would take account of his servants." Now, here the kingdom means that new Kingdom which He had come to set up on earth; that Kingdom into which we have all been baptized, and in which we all hope to die. "His servants:" now we must not look on these as if they were household servants. No; they

were the governors under him of great countries: just as we read in the book of Daniel that "it pleased Darius the king to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes" (because there were a hundred and twenty provinces). It spoils the Parable to think of these servants as we generally think of them, as if they were household servants. No; they were great princes; and all the revenues, that is, the money which came in from their provinces, they were bound to keep, not for themselves, but for their king; and in due time he would call them to account for it. And so he did: and we find what happened at the very beginning of this reckoning. "When he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents." It is almost impossible for us even to fancy what such a huge sum of money means. Ten thousand talents! Now God's House, the Tabernacle in the wilderness, cost only, taking it altogether, twenty-nine talents. And think of the Temple. The Temple itself was about the size, both in length and breadth and height, of our three houses that stand facing the street: and it stood in the middle of a court, about as large as the College, and with another set of buildings all round that. So think. If our three houses had all the walls and the roof lined with gold, the walls themselves being made of most precious cedar wood (to say nothing of the golden altar, and all the marble that was in the court

round about) the whole of this, as we read in the book of Chronicles, cost about ten thousand talents. And that was what this servant of the King, this nobleman, owed. Now, my children, you know what this means; it means how much we all owe to God for what He has done for us, and for what we have done against Him. "It is He That hath made us, and not we ourselves;" and therefore we owe to Him everything that we can do or say or think. It is He That, when there was no other way of our being saved, died for us; and it is He Who, when we had no power of ourselves to keep His commandments, gives us the Holy Ghost that we may have that power.

And then, what have we done in return for all this? What have each of you done this very day? Ask yourselves. Ah, my children, I wish you asked yourselves better! And then, what you have done to-day, you have done every day of your lives; oftentimes much worse. And so put those two things together, the heap of God's Love and the heap of your faults, and you may have some kind of understanding what the ten thousand talents mean.

And then see what this servant had to pay. "Forasmuch as he had not to pay;" that is, had nothing! And so you know very well that of ourselves we could do nothing at all for God's service. You see, one parable cannot tell us everything. This does not teach us at all about our dear Lord's death, or our Baptism: about

those we hear in other parables. Here we are only told that this poor miserable servant who owed this immense sum of money had nothing to pay at all.

And then see what he did.

"The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;" that is, he really felt in earnest then; and he determined to do what he could in future. That was right; but when he said, "I will pay thee all," it shows how little he knew of that which he owed. "If thou, Lord, wilt have patience with me, I will pay thee all." And so you, my children, if you think for one moment that anything you in yourselves can do in the future can make up for the past, you would do what, as I suppose, this nobleman intended to do: "for the future, all that comes in from my province I will pay thee; but as to the time past, I can do nothing; I only trust in thy mercy." That time, those opportunities are gone, we can never bring them back again; we can only pray very humbly that GOD will forgive us for our past sins. Nothing but His mercy can blot them out.

And so, my children, you know very well that if any of you from this time forth set yourselves with all your heart and soul to pay your King all you owe, you can but bring Him a very poor imperfect little fragment, which, however, He will accept, because it is your best.

Well: and now see something else. When this servant had been so forgiven, what did he do, the very first thing? You have heard this parable a hundred times, but perhaps you never noticed the first action of the servant. The same servant *went out:* went out, that is, went away from his lord, and therefore he fell into sin. And notice this too: the King *sent* for His servants because He had a right to send for them: but this unforgiving servant *found* one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence: that is, he went out of his way and took pains to search for him. Just as we sometimes put ourselves out of our way to take offence, and quarrel with somebody who meant us no harm at all. My dear children, when we think how much, how very much God has forgiven us, how much He forgives us every day; who are we that we should be quarrelsome and unforgiving towards those about us?

See now what that was which the fellow-servant owed: *one hundred pence.* If we compare the other great debt with that, it is as if we compared one million two hundred and fifty thousand three hundred, to one: which means that the debt we owe God is something beyond all comparison greater than all that any one can possibly owe us. We have sinned against Him every day and many times a day: and we ask Him to forgive us; and then we go away from our prayers, and find some one who has done

us a little trifling injury, and straightway we are angry and cannot forgive, and must have amends. Now this it is that our Lord would warn us against in this parable. See how it goes on: the fellow-servant besought his creditor in the very same words that himself had used to his Lord; and yet those words did not remind him how lately he had been in trouble himself, nor make him more gentle towards his debtor.

The very same words! Yes, except that the fellow-servant did not call him "Lord:" as neither did he worship him: he spoke as man to man, a debtor indeed, but a debtor to a man his equal, not to the great Lord of both, having power of life and death. But there was neither mercy nor sense of justice in the heart of the cruel creditor: "he went and cast him into prison."

"So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry." *Sorry*—not angry; because good Christians are not angry, but sorry, when they see the sins of their fellows. And what did these do then? What you ought to do, my children; what I, what every Priest, what every Christian ought to do, when we see anything or anybody going wrong: "they went and told their Lord all that was done." We are not to go and waste our time in idle complaining to this person and that; we are to go to our Lord, and tell Him; just as the disciples

did when S. John Baptist had been beheaded: they went, you remember, and told Jesus.

"Then his Lord" "called him" (and you see, tyrant as he was, the unmerciful servant had to obey at once) and "said unto him, 'O thou wicked servant,' (he had not called him *wicked* before,) 'I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?' And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

So, you see, this wicked man was now condemned to far sorer punishment than he had bestowed on his own poor debtor: and to far sorer punishment than his Lord would have inflicted on him that other time. We heard nothing of tormentors then. But now we do; and they are to torment him till he shall pay all: and as he never can do it, so they will never cease their torments.

This, then, is clear: that if, when God has forgiven us, we will not forgive our fellow-creatures, we shall displease Him more than ever. There is no Heaven for the unforgiving: nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment. And so our dear Lord, our own Elder Brother, Who tells us so lovingly elsewhere that His Father is our Father too, does not speak of Him so here. "So likewise shall *My* heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from

your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." His Father will not be our Father—will not own us for His children, unless we forgive as He forgives. Not just saying we forgive, and feeling angry and hurt all the time: but really and truly, from our hearts forgiving, and ready to love those whoever they may be that offend us, and show them our love by doing them some little kindness as soon as we can.

So, and so only, can we be the children of our Father Which is in Heaven. So, and so only, shall we share the blessings promised to the meek, and the merciful, and the poor in spirit.

READING VI.*

"The Lord gave the Word." PSALM lxviii. 11

A BRIGHT and happy Christmas to you all, my Sisters! Bright with the brightness of the Eternal Sun, happy with the love and consolation of Him, the Child given, the Son born, for you; but not the less the Bridegroom, arraying Himself in the humble vest of our humanity, to the end that He may one day clothe you with the glorious raiment of His Divinity!

A bright and happy Christmas to you all, my children! This night, another dear Child comes into the world; another poor little Baby begins a life of pain and sorrow. There He lies on His blessed Mother's lap; the frost is sharp without; the stable is lighted up by one poor lantern within; the little town of Bethlehem is quiet after all the day's work of taxing; and no one remembers the two weary strangers that came in this evening. Are there lodgings? Is there one room? Part of one room? Is there one bed? No: no: no. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

My children, would not you have longed to take that dear little Baby into your own arms, to have chafed His poor cold tiny Hands and Feet, to have played with Him, to have amused Him,

* Preached Christmas Eve, 1859.

to have done all for Him that other infants need? I know you would. But yet when you remembered that this poor Infant was indeed the Everlasting God, that these little Arms were at that very moment holding up the world, that this Voice, now not able to speak in sentences, only to utter expressions of sorrow or joy, is the very Voice which will one day say to you, "Come, ye blessed," or "Depart, ye cursed:" what then? Should you then have dared to touch Him? Should you not rather have said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven?"

Yes, my Sisters; and you also are standing by the Manger; you also worship, where the world rejects. O Infant, chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely! Infant and Virgin Leader of the virgin bands that hereafter are to be nearest to Thee! Is it not to Thee that the desire of their souls is now, in this great Feast, at all Feasts, during all times, in all seasons? Is not that weakness to be your strength? Or think for one moment of what the Virgin Mother must have suffered during that last afternoon, without a home or shelter, when the very claim of womanhood cried Shame on those that refused her! Yet, "Fear not, Mary, thou hast found favour with God." Think of her danger, and weariness, and shame: for if her husband had been cheered and taught by the holy Angel,

yet he alone. Nevertheless, "Fear not, Mary." Such a refuge, such a hiding-place at last! And He to be the Eternal Refuge, the Heavenly and securest Hiding-place! Well, for all that, "Fear not, Mary."

Listen once more, my children. "The Lord gave the Word." What Word? S. John tells you at the beginning of his Gospel. I think that some of you know it by heart. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." That was the Word Whom He now gave. And how? Why, God the Father sent this most precious Baby to be your own, your very own; to belong to you all your lives; not only while you are children, but when you grow up; not only while you are in health, but when you become sick and weak: not only in life, but also in death. He was born for you here, for you He goes through all the weakness and helplessness of childhood. Now those little Hands move this way and that; stroke and pat His dear Mother's face; by and by they will be stretched out as far as the cruel soldiers can drag them from each other, and will be pierced with great cruel nails, and clenched to the Cross. Now those little Feet leap for joy, as all babies' do when a firm hand is held under them; by and by they will walk through

the hot sand, they will toil up the steep mountain, and lastly, they too will be dug through by the like fierce nails. Those little Lips now draw in their dear and sweet nourishment from the spotless breast of S. Mary; by and by gall and vinegar, that will be their portion, gall and vinegar, myrrh and wine.

And for you, dear Sisters; what will those weak Arms of the helpless Infant be hereafter to you? "His left Hand should be under my head, and His right Hand should embrace me!" They will in time; but it is when they shall have been strengthened. How? In what manner is it that, according to His Human Nature, this Infant of Bethlehem shall become the Almighty Helper? You know it: by suffering. Take notice of that verse in Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts, I am the First and I am the Last." The First! Yes: always. In that glorious City, whose streets are of gold, and whose gates of pearls; amidst the utmost bounds of the Everlasting Hills; by the banks of the River of the Water of Life. And the Last: here, the Last: now, the Last; when He had no better courtiers than ox and ass; the Last, when the poor town sent Him to the miserable inn, and the miserable inn cast Him out into the beggarly stable.

I am the Last. Now, children, have you never heard your playmates say,—have you

never said yourselves,—*I am the first?* You have done this or that better than others, you have got through such or such a thing faster than others. Is not this so? But did you ever hear any one say, did you ever say yourselves, aloud, intending others to hear, wishing them to hear, "I am the last?" I think not; it is almost as hard a sentence to pronounce as that "I am wrong." Well, then, notice, Who says it now. The mighty God, He says it; the Prince of Peace, He says it. We poor miserable creatures are ashamed; He, the great God, Who is One with His Father, makes this one of His Titles: "I am the First and I am the Last;" or, as it is written in the Revelation, "I am the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Ah, dear children! if He had not then been the Last, what would have become of us? If He had never lain in the Manger, how should we ever have stood before the Throne?

And for you, my Sisters, "the Lord gave the Word." Gave Him then, in the inn; gave Him afterwards, on the Cross; gives Him still on the Altar. You know that lovely allegory of S. Catherine of Sienna: you have seen some of those marvellous pictures in which the Divine Infant holds forth the Bridal Ring to the kneeling Saint; visitors admire the figures, or the colouring, or the grouping, and then go away and forget it. But for you, that action, that offer, must be your love of loves, must be your life of lives!

And so I end as I began: a bright and happy Christmas to you both, Children of the Child King; poor Brides of the Bridegroom Whose Bridal Court was the bare and cold Cross! Bright, from the brightness of the eternal summer; happy, in that peace, which the world cannot give, nor take away!

READING VII.*

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem." S. Luke ii. 15.

ONCE more, my Sisters, once more, my Children, a happy Christmas! To you, Sisters in His service, the Bridegroom of the Bride, the Lover of Chastity; to you, children of the Child King, dear to Him Who is lying in the Manger for your sake.

How it is to be a happy Christmas, you hear in the text; that gives the only way, that shows the only means. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem."

Let *us;* then that tells us that there are others who will not. And we all know how sadly true that is. A merry Christmas is not of necessity a happy Christmas. It is not a happy Christmas, that of theirs who will in thousands and tens of thousands go down to the Crystal Palace to-morrow, only set on enjoying themselves, quite forgetting how He, Whose Birth they profess to be honouring, joyful as that Birth was for us, was Himself the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. It is still less a happy Christmas, that of those who have a holiday indeed from their everyday work, but only that they may spend it in riotous

* Preached at the First Vespers of Christmas, 1863.

living as the Prodigal Son, in drunkenness and revellings, and worse. But, as I say, the text tells you what *is*. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem."

What is going to Bethlehem? Ah me, what a joy it would be—would it not!—if we could to-morrow be carried away to that real Bethlehem, see the Church that stands over what was once the Manger, see where the Angel appeared, see where the Shepherds worshipped! But remember what He, Who cannot lie, Himself said, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed."

We *can* go in thought. We can see the poor little Baby, the very and eternal God, laid in a manger, while yet sitting on the Throne of the Father. We can see what kind of courtiers He had, the ox and the ass; as it is written, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." We can imagine, now, or when we wake in the night, what those night watches were, the sheep penned in their fold because of the wolves and bears, the shepherds lying in the open air, guarding their charge; and then the great light from heaven, and then the one Angel who said, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people;" and then the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

We can do that, my children; but you can do much more, you, the elder girls. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem." What does Bethlehem mean? Bethlehem is, by interpretation, the House of Bread. Now to what House of Bread ought you to resolve to go? What is the True Bread that cometh down from heaven? What is that Bread whereof if a man eat he shall not die? What is that truer Manna, that Angels' Food? You know. Ah, my children, you who are to receive to-night, you who are to receive to-morrow, you know how you ought to come, with what holiness, with what purity, with what love to Him.

"Let us *now* go (good advice of the shepherds to you not to put it off) *even* unto Bethlehem;" the even showing that it is not an easy thing. It was not an easy thing for them to leave their sheep and their folds; it is not an easy thing for you to be self-denying, to follow God's will rather than your own. Easy! It is the hardest thing, the one thing of your lives: it is the thing in which that better life begins. Nevertheless, my children, nevertheless, my Sisters, "Let *us* now go even unto Bethlehem."

READING VIII.*

"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus." S. LUKE ii. 21.

IF I were to ask you what a Sacrament is, you would answer at once as it is in the Prayer-Book, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself." Now this present day puts us in mind of a law which God had given the Jews, and which in some sense might be called a Sacrament, I mean circumcision. That was an outward sign, and of an inward and spiritual grace too, for it marked out all those who received it to be members of God's Church, His only Church at that time, Israel. But see how it differed from Baptism: in four ways. I wonder if I were to ask you whether you would tell me them for yourselves.

1. It was painful; whereas Baptism, as we all know, has no pain nor inconvenience.

2. It was to be done at a particular time, namely, on the eighth day, whereas Baptism can be received at any time.

3. It only had to do with half the chosen people of God, seeing that males only were circumcised.

* Preached on the feast of the Circumcision, 1860.

4. And lastly, it gave no power to keep God's law; it only showed that the person who received this rite was bound to keep it. It says over and over again that the soul that was uncircumcised should be cut off from His people. The Jews say that the meaning of that text is this: If a Jewish child found that, either by some mistake, or by the death of his parents, or from whatever other cause, he had not been circumcised, he was bound at the age of thirteen to go to the priest and desire that the rite might be performed: thirteen, because that was the age of Ishmael when he receivd circumcision. And if he did not do it then, before he reached the age of one-and-twenty he would be cut off by God's especial judgment. And it was to this law that our Lord Jesus Christ, He who came to fulfil all the Law, vouchsafed, as on this day, to be subject. And see how it reminds us of the vows we have taken on ourselves, of the service with which we are bound; that the very beginning of the year should be the beginning of our Lord's sufferings. He says to us now again, what He so often and in so many other ways has told us, that we must suffer before we can reign, that we must make up our minds to have the bitter first and the sweet afterwards.

I know this seems a hard saying to you, children; I know it is so natural for you to think that you should like to have the pleasure now,

while everything is, so to speak, new and fresh and gay, and then that you will put up with the more sorrowful part by and by when the freshness of your life begins to wear out. Now do you know that, even as far back as the first chapter in the Bible, you are taught differently? You will ask how that can be. It is thus. When we are being told of the several works which God performed on the seven days of the week, it is always said, The evening and the morning were the second, or third, or whatever day it might be: the evening and the morning, not as we generally say, the morning and the evening. But God's reckoning is different. He puts the evening first, and the morning last. He sets the darkness before the light. He says: "Ye must through much tribulation enter into My Kingdom." Satan, on the other hand, puts all the bright and pretty things he has to offer in the first place, and then, by and by, we find out—but not till by and by—that "the wages of sin is death." Our dear Lord begins His Infancy for Himself, begins the new year for all of us by pain: yes, and by the shedding of His most precious Blood.

I know it seems hard to tell children that they are not to care for pain. But I will tell you what I was reading the other day. We have a battle to fight, as you all know: a very hard, and cruel, and fierce battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And whatever it may cost

us, we must and we will get the better of them. Now, perhaps you have heard that about a year ago we were fighting against the Chinese; and it so fell out that with three ships, our soldiers and sailors had to force their way up a river, the banks of which were fortified against us. It was one of the very few times in which Englishmen have been beaten; but why I speak to you about it you shall hear. When the artillerymen, who have to do with firing the cannons on board ship, are engaged in their work, they are waited upon by boys not older than most of you are, who go down into the magazines below and fetch up the gunpowder, as it is wanted. They are called powder-monkeys, because they are so little, and have to be so active. Well, one of these, who had been busily employed all the morning, and who had seen three or four of his little playfellows shot down before his face, and who himself had been terribly cut about with broken bits of wood hit this way and that way by cannon-balls, was bringing up more powder, when the captain of the gun, pitying such a poor little boy in such danger, told him to go down below and keep quiet. "No:" he said, "I don't care a straw what happens to me, only don't let those Chinamen beat us." Now, what he said in an earthly battle, that you ought to say in a spiritual battle. As S. Paul says, "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

It does not matter, or it ought not to matter, how much we suffer, how much we labour, how much, to use the common expression, we get knocked about, so that only we do not allow our great enemies to beat us at last. And this is what our Lord set us an example of on this very day. He said Himself, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." But how long did He wait before He began to destroy those works? Only eight days. Then, however painful it were, whatever were the griefs of His Blessed Mother, and His own shrinking as an Infant from suffering, He so ordered it that He should submit to circumcision, and so obey the law, and leave us an example.

How leave us an example? You know what it says in the Collect: "Grant us the true circumcision of the spirit." The true circumcision means, that we should give up, and cut off, and put away from us whatever is against the will of God; just as you would cut off from a plant any branch or bough which was hurtful to the whole tree; just what our Lord means when He says, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."

When I first came to the College, there was a vine, which was the largest and best looking of all our vines: it sent out great shoots, much more than any other, and the leaves were much

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richer and more plentiful. But,—and what a *but* that is!—it never used to yield a single grape. At last, one day when I went out, I found this vine almost cut down to the ground; instead of covering the whole side of the wall, it did not rise a yard above the bed; and I felt quite angry that any one could have so destroyed it. But the gardener told me that this was the only way to make it bear fruit; that it was too rank, too fertile; that when it grew up again, instead of spending all its strength on leaves, it would bear grapes also. And he was quite right, for in process of time so it did.

And so, Children, when I wish you, as I do with all my heart, a happy New Year, it may be that I am wishing you some trouble and some grief and some temptation in its course. For God may see that the year cannot be really happy for you unless you suffer these things; just as the gardener saw that it could not be really well for that vine, unless the boughs that were too strong for it, and that sucked up all its strength, were cut away. And there is the comfort, you know, that if we are really trying to serve Him and to please Him, He will so order things that, whether they are for our present happiness or not, at all events they shall be for our eternal good. In one sense it is a sad thing that the year should begin with such a Feast as this. A day of pain to a poor little innocent Infant. But that pain was the beginning of our

salvation. That pain and that sorrow grew and grew till they came to the full on Good Friday. And then they soon ended in Easter, just as S. Paul says, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

READING IX.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24.

There was once on a time a village,—a poor, miserable, filthy, decaying village, in the dominions of a Great King. Why this Great King allowed it so to be; why He permitted the poor inhabitants to dwell in such wretched cottages, to be subject to all manner of sicknesses, to be used to such a doleful climate, when He might, by one word, have removed them into a glorious country, where the sun ever shines, where there is perpetual spring, where the flowers are always in blossom, nay, where, as I have read in a very old Book, "the sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself," and more wonderful still, where "the inhabitant shall not say I am sick;" why the King, I say, permitted all these things, great and good as He was, neither can I tell you, nor could the wisest man in this world explain. But so it was.

Yet He did not leave the inhabitants of that village altogether without hope. He appointed means whereby His banished ones (for all these had once dwelt in his palace, and had been banished thence by their own fault) should

return to Him. And this was the way. I will tell you what I myself saw when I was last in that village; and then you will better understand for yourselves what was the law He had laid down.

It was a great day in the place. You could see that everybody was up and stirring, as if some out-of-the-way event were about to happen; and all the inhabitants were bending their course in one direction. I followed also. And as I went, I noticed that some looked eager and anxious, as if they were deeply interested in that which was about to happen; some laughed and jeered, and said that the whole was nonsense altogether; some looked stupid and careless; some said that the thing was hopeless; some said it was very easy. And all the while we were pressing on to the place.

What was the thing? and where was the place? The place was a kind of race-course, marked out on the green turf, at some distance from the village. But it was rather different from usual race-courses. There were four starting-places on this side, that is, on the side where I was standing, and next to the village; and a great way off, far away on the other side of the heath or common, four flags fluttering in the wind; one for each of the starting-places here. He that set off from each starting-place here, was to go to a particular flag on the other side. And I am told that the whole course had been marked

out by the particular orders of the Great King; that no one knew what was the nature of the ground between the starting-place and the goal; that, as indeed I could see, the ground was in some places uneven and rough; but besides this, it was reported that there were swamps and quicksands, which, unless you took care to keep straight on your path, might swallow you up. And then again, I was told, that the racers did not run against each other, but against time. Each of them set off at a particular stroke, struck by a great clock which stood near; they ran on, they ran their best, until that great clock struck again, and this time with a different sound. I was told that it was a very dreadful sound to hear. But, said they, if the runner has reached the flag that stands on the further side when the clock strikes again, then it is well with him for ever; then the King takes him to Himself, and causes him to be clothed in white, and gives him one among the many mansions which He has in that far Country, and gives orders that he shall dwell with Him for ever and ever.

Then I asked if it was a very hard race which they had to run? They said, "Yes;" that it was very difficult to all; but that herein lay the great comfort, that the King so ordered all things that the runners were never exhorted to attempt that which was impossible for them: that every one might win if he would; that

although the greater part failed, yet it was by their own fault, and not by the King's. For, as I was then informed and indeed firmly believed, before they were allowed to enter on this race, the King commanded His servants to cause them to enter into a certain Bath by which their strength was renewed, and whatever weakness or infirmity they might have had before, the same was then removed from them, and they were, as it might be said, born anew.

"But," said I, "are there not any rules that these persons who would win the race must observe before they can set forth upon it? Is there not any kind of preparation through which they must pass, if they would have a fair chance of obtaining this prize of which you speak?"

"Certainly there are such rules," said they who stood about me. "It is written in one of the King's books, that all such as would contend in this race must be 'temperate in all things.' And one of the King's best servants, who lived now a many years ago, has left it on record behind him, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.' Nevertheless, there are very few now-a-days who take the trouble to do so much. Every one is obliged to try, whether he will or not. But some hardly trouble themselves to run at all. Some begin well, and almost immediately fall away. Some sit down to rest so often, that they hardly give themselves a chance of coming to the end in the appointed

time. Some towards the middle of the race sit down and fall asleep, and never wake till they are roused up by that clock, at the striking of which it is impossible to sleep any longer. And there are some who have begun well, who have gone on well even to almost the very end, and who then, for some reason or other, scarcely to be guessed at by others, have fallen away."

You may easily suppose that, hearing so much of the difficulty and the danger of these races, I was anxious to see one for myself; and as I was told that some were then shortly to begin, I resolved to wait in order that I might learn for myself more about the subject. And, indeed, while I was in the country, I saw a great many such; and when I got more used to the habits and customs of the people, and to the laws of the King, I used sometimes to do what in me lay to help this or that person forward in their race.

But on this particular occasion, as I told you, four were going to run: and, as I presently found out, they were four children. For, as I was told, the King of that land was a great lover of children; and His Son, when once He happened to be travelling through the country, said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Presently I saw these four who were to run in the present race. There were two boys and two girls. The names of the boys were Cyril and Paulinus; the names of the girls were Hilda and Phœbe. There could not

well be a greater difference between any four children than there was between these, considering that all were about the same age, say eleven or twelve. Cyril looked all life and fire, he was rather thin, but strong set and wiry; he had a very bright eye, he held his head well up, and looked like a young greyhound, eager to start. Paulinus was quite different, clumsy and heavily made, and seemingly knowing very little how or which way he should run.

"Surely," I said to an old man who stood by, "Cyril is pretty sure to win the race." "In this race," he replied, "it is impossible to judge by outward appearance. Our King has said of Himself, that He seeth not as man seeth. May be as you say; but if you should live in this country as long as I have done, you will learn that it is quite impossible to form any judgment as to success or defeat so soon as this."

So again: Phœbe was a bright, pretty-looking, elegant little girl, such a one as must take any one's fancy at first sight. Hilda was a poor, timid, awkward-looking thing, who seemed afraid of herself and of the race, and of everybody about her, and appeared sadly in need of some one to whisper a word of comfort in her ear.

And lo! when I looked again I perceived that the children were not alone; for that a glorious spirit stood by each. Such a spirit, I was told, was to accompany each; was to do all he could for his own charge; was to encourage, to help,

to remove difficulties, to advise in dangers, to do all that such a friend and companion could do. Such bright creatures, I learnt, dwelt by thousands in the court of the King, and some of them were sent by Him to wait on His subjects in this village.

"Then have each of these children," I asked, "the same time for their race? Does one clock strike for them all?"

"By no means," was the reply. "Each has his own clock, and when that clock strikes, that one, whichever he or she may be, will be able to run no longer. If before that happens he has reached the goal, I have told you of the blessed things which will happen to him. If it strikes while he is yet running, or, as is so often the case, while he is sleeping, there will be no further hope for him; he will never dwell in that palace to which the King has invited him. Nay, he will be carried by evil angels to a place prepared for them who have disobeyed the King's commandments."

I saw that these spirits were giving what consolation they might to each of their dear charges, when the signal for starting was given, and all four began forthwith to run. First of Cyril. It was quite a pleasure to see him contend in this race; he ran so well, so uprightly, throwing his head back, and pulling his elbows in on his sides. In a very few minutes he had quite distanced all the others. I should have thought

very well of his hopes of success; but those who stood by, and who were more used to the race than I was, shook their heads, and, as I could see, were less hopeful about such a brilliant beginning.

Paulinus seemed to run as well as he could, but his pace was very slow; and if it were speed that was to win the prize, I could not have much expectation for him. Phœbe was active enough, but was continually running out of her way on this side or that, to gather some bright flower, or to catch some pretty butterfly; and I thought to myself, If you should ever be tempted far from the straight line, as you are now tempted a little from it; what, poor child, would become of you?

And then there was Hilda. She seemed as awkward in running at first as she had been in everything else; hardly could tell which way to go, hardly knew how to put one foot before the other; but still she seemed to me to be in earnest, and that was the great thing in the sight of the King.

Now what happened after this I must tell you on another Sunday; for the present, I would only say to you what I heard said to these children, "So run, that ye may obtain."

READING X.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24.

I TOLD you, some Sundays ago, of a certain Race in which I saw four children, at the command of the King of that country, set forth. How those that won it were to go and live with Him, in His own bright Palace for ever: how those that lost it were carried away by doleful creatures into a place of outer darkness; there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. I told you that these children had not, as in most races, to run one against another, but against time; that a loud clock struck for each, when he or she had to start, and struck for each when they were to leave off. If they had reached the goal before it struck, happy were they for ever; if not, you know their sentence. You remember also how I said that Cyril had started off like a young greyhound, and held his head so high, his arms so well to his sides, and looked so steadily before him, that I hoped the best things; that Paulinus began slowly and heavily; that Phœbe, like Cyril, threw her companions far behind; and that little Hilda was the most awkward, the most lagging, the hindmost of them all. And so it continued for some

little time; and still it seemed to me that I was able to see the racers as if they were close to me; and to mark what they did, and how they looked.

Now, the ground over which Cyril had been running was a soft turf; and while he was on that, he excelled all the others. But presently they came into a kind of deep lane, something like that lane by which we go to Luxford Rocks. Only here the sides glittered with all manner of precious stones; there were great cubes of crystal, that shone out gloriously in the sun: and pearls, that had a softer smooth beauty; and rubies, as crimson as the clouds are where the sun goes to bed at night; and emeralds, of as lovely a green as the young shoots will be about two months hence. I noticed that these things caught Cyril's eye; he looked on this side, and on that, and seemed disposed to stop for a moment. Then the bright spirit that moved on close to him seemed to say somewhat to him; and if I heard rightly, the words were these:—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The boy looked forward once more, and still ran on; then he looked again: wavered; was spoken to by his companion and answered,—"Oh! I will not be a minute!" and presently I saw him kneeling by the roadside, and knocking off one gem after another, and crowding them into his pouch.

"Did I not tell you," said the old man, who had spoken before, "that it is not those who start so bravely of whom we are disposed to think the best? That poor child, look, is wasting his time, weighing himself down with stones; and what for? before he is taken into the King's Palace he must throw them all away."

"But he has plenty of time," I said.

"Plenty of time!" returned the old man. "No one has *plenty* of time, every one has time enough, just time enough, and that is all. But let us watch him still."

Cyril so far kept his word, that this time he did not stay long in gathering the precious stones. While he lingered, the Angel took hold of his hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and set him on his way once more. He ran on, it is true: but his pouch was heavy, and hung out in a way that distressed him very much. Yet he never seemed to think of emptying it again. On the contrary, I saw him cast wistful glances on the finer gems that happened to meet his eye; and at last so magnificent a ruby stood out before him, that I heard him say, "I must, and will, have this." He had to wrench it off from the rock; but it was beyond his strength: then he looked about for a stone to serve as a hammer, and not immediately seeing one, at last he actually turned his back on the way he ought to go, and went some few paces till he had gained what he sought. Then he set

to work, hewing, and knocking, and chipping: and the spirit, his companion, stood by looking at him with a most grieved face. And then came a sentence into my mind, which I had read in one of the King's books: "The Angels of peace shall weep bitterly."

I looked away from him, and saw Paulinus. He was coming on slowly and laggingly; yet with a sort of determination that made me think him likely to get in at last. And lo! his race lay over quite a different kind of road. It was a dull, straight, wearisome path, over a swampy common; nothing to be seen on this side or that, but a dark, slow stream, that ran along by the side of this path. The sky, too, was cloudy, but very sultry; and I could see that Paulinus felt the heat and the dulness much. All common and marsh to where the sky seemed to touch the earth; only the sound of the bullfrog among the rushes; and sometimes a heavy bird, like the bittern or the owl, flapped his wings across the path! Also there arose a mist from the fens, poisonous and oppressive; and Paulinus seemed to be looking about for a place where he might sit down for a while. The Angel, I could see, reasoned with him, urged him to hold out a little longer, told him that the fog would soon pass over; said that he would soon cross the common. But no: the child grew more and more weary; and at length, seeing a bank by the wayside covered

with ferns, he sat down there, as he said, for a few minutes. But presently he began to nod; then he roused himself up, and talked of going on; nodded again, this time longer; and again roused himself. Till at last, quite overcome with drowsiness, he sank back on the ferns, and fell fast asleep.

Then said I to the old man, my friend, "Is there no hope for him?"

"Yes," he answered; "he is in great danger, but there is hope. The Angel that is with him will not leave him thus."

But let us turn to another. Phœbe's way lay over pleasant fields, then in their spring beauty; with all kinds of flowers growing in the hedges and in the meadows. The air was sweet with May and dog roses; and all the sky seemed full of the songs of larks. The little girl went happily on; sometimes singing for very joy; sometimes gathering a flower from the hedge, and decking herself with it. And the Angel looked on well pleased; but yet with a kind of anxiety on his brow: at which I marvelled, and asked the old man why he, whose charge was running so well and so happily should have cause for fear.

"Because," he said, "the Angel knows that it is in these pleasant ways that there is most danger. The Son of our King, Who once walked through this country, only once in His whole race stepped into a pleasant path; I

have read in an old Book that in a certain hour, 'He rejoiced in spirit.' Therefore the Angel may well fear. Besides, if you observe, though Phœbe is running very fairly, she has not made so much distance as Cyril did when he was stopped by the jewels. She runs well, but not very fast."

Then I looked for Hilda, and saw, sure enough, my poor little awkward child. But whereas all round Phœbe it was spring; here it was deep, dark winter. She might well look unhappy, and the big tears roll down her poor thin cheeks. She had a steep hill before her, deep, deep in snow. Over head were here and there dark pine-trees, in whose boughs the wind made a low moaning, very sad to hear. From the bare branches of other trees icicles hung down. There was no spot of blue sky to be seen; and the snow drove in the little girl's face, and she sometimes plunged into the drifts far above her knees. But none of the other Angels seemed so attentive to their charge, so lovingly fond of it, as was this. The good Angel held one hand of Hilda's in his own left, and supported her round the waist with his right; almost lifting her onwards when the snow was deepest and heaviest. And yet, even while I admired his love, I saw him do something which seemed cruel. He gave the child a stick cut from a strong thorn-bush, and jagged all over with spikes and briars, and he bade her lean on it.

She did so, and I could see that her hand was torn and bled from its use. And yet the more it bled, the more strength and courage she seemed to have; the tears were by degrees dried up, and presently she spoke quite cheerfully.

"Do you think the worst is over?" she asked.

"I cannot tell," the dear Angel said, in a very soft sweet voice, "that is as the King has ordered. But this I know, that when the Prince was in this country, He went by this very same path; and the storm was worse; oh, so far worse! and the snow heavier and deeper."

"I love to hear about the Prince," said Hilda; "tell me more of Him." And the Angel did. And though, as it seemed to me, the snow drove thicker, and the wind howled more fiercely, and the day grew darker, yet that poor little face brightened up as the child heard the History of the Good Prince. But it is time to look again at the others.

It seemed that Cyril had at last left his ruby: but when I came to observe, I found that in getting it from the rock, he had given the gem a blow, and broken it in many pieces. So it was utterly spoilt. Then he had lost more time in crying for this loss: so that now, although he seemed to me to be advancing in earnest, he was not very much further on his journey than before. However, I thought that he had thrown away some of the stones from his pouch: and though he did not run so well as at the begin-

ning, yet he went on with a good courage; and the Angel, too, looked hopeful.

Then I looked at him who stood by Paulinus as he slept. And I saw that this spiritual being was looking towards the Great King's Palace; and, as I judged, was calling upon Him for help. And lo! the clouds gathered in the sky, thick, black, and terrible: and the thunder roared, and the lightning flashed, and Paulinus started from his sleep. Then he girt himself up to his journey again; and while the storm lasted he seemed terrified, and really to be making the best of his way. But as soon as it had passed, he fell back into his slow dreamy pace, and looked about as if to find some other place of rest.

Further than either of these was Phœbe. But I saw that she had gathered so many flowers, that she had begun weaving them into wreaths for herself. And though, in itself, there was no harm in this, yet it caused her to look less warily to her steps; and she had one or two bad falls, and hurting herself went somewhat lame.

But Hilda was far, far beyond the rest. How so weak a child contrived to get on so swiftly was a marvel to me. The old man's eyes, as he looked at her, were full of tears, and he said, "I doubt not but her clock is soon about to strike. It is written in one of our books, 'He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time'" And I listened, and still their talk

was of the Prince, how He Himself felt for those that were in the race, saw them from afar, rejoiced in their joy, and sorrowed in their troubles. And oh, how bitterly cold it was! The naked twigs seemed to shiver in the frost: the snow drove blindingly against them, and the child, never strong, seemed to me almost worn out. But as I looked at her stedfastly, I thought I saw a kind of circle of light, but very faint, round her head: and the old man said, that it was such an ornament, only very, very much inferior, as they wore, who were admitted into the Palace of the Great King.

And now they pressed up a little hill: and as they ascended it the snow ceased; and the sun, now nearly in the horizon, shone out with a bright yellow smile. The robins began to sing; there was a kind of winter beauty which quite made me glad; and at the top of the hill was a white marble Cross, which when the Angel saw, he cried out, "Happy Hilda! there is the goal!"

Then the child redoubled all her efforts to get forward: for it was plain that her strength was almost all gone, and that she could not take many steps more. And just as she reached the steps, on which the marble Cross stood, a glorious Form was by them, Whom I knew to be the Prince of that Land. And at that same moment Hilda's clock struck.

I saw the child fall on her knees, and hold out her arms to the Prince; and I heard the

Angel say, "She is Thine, O Lord and lover of souls;" and I heard for the last time Hilda's sweet faint voice: "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Then I saw the Prince raise her up, and kiss her pale forehead; and this He said: "Lo! the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come; arise, My love, My fair one, and come away." And then I knew that poor little Hilda would be taken into the bright Palace.

This made me get more anxious for the others. And I turned to Paulinus, whom I thought in the most danger. There was now a hill before him,—not very steep, nothing like so steep and rough as those which Hilda had travelled over, —but he would not make the effort. He sat down again; the Angel tried three or four times to arouse him, and each time the boy seemed more angry at being disturbed, and each time more gloomy grew the countenance of the Angel. While he was thus sitting his clock began to strike. "Oh no!" he screamed out; "not yet! not yet! I have not half done my journey; it cannot be time: others have so much more time. Oh save me! save me!" he shrieked to the Angel.

But the Angel was gone!

And, as the clock ceased striking, two frightful creatures, like winged dragons, black and

horrible, came swiftly through the air; and fastening on the wretched boy with their talons, carried him off to the place of punishment. I could long hear his screams and yells till they died in the distance.

While I was trembling with fear and thinking over this, the old man told me that Phœbe had reached home safely. The Prince, he said, met her also, but not so quickly as Hilda, nor did He greet her so lovingly; but He *did* meet her, and took her also to dwell with Him for ever.

And now there only remained Cyril. When I looked for him again, he had made a great distance, and I thought must be near the end of his journey. But, O foolish traveller! he was again tempted by some shining stones by the wayside, and again knelt to gather them. The Angel urged, entreated, prayed him to go on, but in vain. At last a form, very awful-looking, came along the road, but so dimly and indistinctly, I could not make out what it was. And it said: "Cyril, your hour is going to strike."

Then Cyril leapt up, and threw away his pouch, and ran for his life. And now I could see the marble Cross clear before him, as he ran panting up the hill; but I also saw those two black dragons swiftly and silently following him; and I could not tell whether he would first reach the goal, or they pounce on him. Oh, how he then strained every nerve! how the sweat poured from his face! how his breath

came thick and sobbingly! And I thought to myself, O Cyril, a quarter of this labour early in the day, and you would have gone in calmly and joyously now.

Just as he was a few paces from the cross, the clock struck. But there came a darkness over the whole scene, so that I could not see whether the Prince was there or not. Once, indeed, I thought I saw Him; and the old man, whose eyes were better than mine, was even yet more hopeful; but I never could tell for certain to this day whether Cyril is really living in the bright Palace, or has been carried off by the dragons. But the old man told me that it was written of the Prince: "He is able to save to the uttermost all that call on Him." And with that I was forced to be content.

Now, my children, remember this one thing. Just such a race as that of which I have been telling you, I am looking at now, while I watch you. How many Hildas shall I see among you? How many Phœbes? At least may God of His infinite mercy grant that not one Paulinus!

One of you this next week is about to begin a new course of this race, leaving this home, and going out into a dangerous and wicked world. I can only pray that what Hilda's guardian Angel did for her, so in all her goings out and comings in may that dear Spirit who is the Guardian Angel of Frances do for her also!

READING XI.*

"Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts." JOEL ii. 15, 16.

You see, my dear children, that you have as much to do with the business of this Day as we have. For think: if it were especially commanded that the Jewish children should be gathered together when a solemn fast was to be kept, how much more you? They never knew of One Who, though He were the Almighty God, yet took upon Himself the form of a Child, yet worked as other children in the shop of His father, had the same griefs, the same pleasures, the same amusements, yes, and the same temptations, too, that other children now have. And again: they had never been made, as you have all been made, children of God. Their bodies had never been consecrated at Baptism to be temples of the Holy Ghost; God stood very far off from them, compared with His nearness to you. And yet, here the command is plain, "Gather the children."

You all know why it is that we keep this most holy time; you all know what we have to do in it. Yes; we all. I remember when I was

* Preached at the beginning of Lent.

a child, I used to think that grown-up people, if they were really earnest in serving God, could not have such difficult temptations to overcome, could not have the same need for watchfulness, the same necessity for prayer; that the doing right, came, so to speak, more naturally to them. I know that you think the very same thing now; but if it please God to spare you to become women, you will find out for yourselves what a mistake it is. Ask your dear Mother, ask any of the Sisters, ask me, if you like, whether we do not find it very hard work to take up our cross daily and to follow our Lord; whether it is not very disagreeable to have to leave undone so many things that we should like to do, and to do so many things that we had much rather not do; and I am sure that we should all give you the same answer. This is a battle which grown-up people have to fight, just as much as children: which the greatest Saint now alive has to carry on exactly as much as those who are only just beginning to serve God.

Now then, dear children, this being so, let us see what it is that we really have to do this Lent. You know what it is that we all want to be, if God shall be pleased to spare us till Easter: we want to be holier, at the end of Lent, than we were at the beginning. And this we must remember, that if we are not better we shall be worse; because if we do not try when God tells

us that this is our time for trying, and when He especially promises to help us, we are sinning against Him; and if we do try, and suffer ourselves to be beaten, we are surely sinning against Him, too. Now, my children, you have begun very well, and I hope we shall all begin in the same manner. You have each of you taken, and I hope we all have taken, the sin which you know gives you the greatest trouble, and costs you most to get rid off, and have determined to try what you can do against it, before Easter comes. Only remember this: there is nothing easier in the world than to begin well. The proverb, you know, says, "Well begun, half done;" but it is not at all so in the service of God. I remember that when I was a child, I used to make up my mind every Saturday evening that I would try and pass through the next week without committing one sin; and sometimes I used to try very hard, yes, and to pray very earnestly, too, that I might succeed. But then I always made this sad mistake (and I had no one, my children, to tell me of my mistakes, as you have of yours), as soon as ever in the week that was to have been so good I did anything that was wrong, I used to think, Well, this week is spoilt now, and so it is no use to try any more; I will begin again next week. Now I should be very sorry if any of you were to act in the same way about this Lent. Besetting sins are not to be overcome all at once.

I know that before many days, perhaps before many hours have passed, you will have given way again to what you had so thoroughly determined to conquer. Yes, my children, and I should not at all wonder, if I could look into your hearts, to find that some one of you, perhaps more, have this very day yielded to the temptation. And what then? Why, then you are not to be in the least, no, not the least little bit in the world, discouraged. You must begin patiently all over again; it is what we all have to do; I myself just as often as any of you; and what we shall have to do. I daresay you have heard the story of the King of Scotland and the spider. This King of Scotland had been attacked by his enemies; had been beaten in several battles, was forsaken by nearly all his friends, and knew that if he were taken he would at once be put to death. He was hiding in a cottage, and as he was walking in its garden, very sad, as you may well think, he noticed a spider that was trying to get to the top of the garden wall. Just as it had almost reached the summit, it fell to the ground. Immediately it set about the work again, ran up the wall as before, and when it was all but at the top, fell the second time. The King got interested in the poor insect, and watched it on. A third time it tried with just the same success; and so time after time, till the eighth. The eighth time it also fell in the same manner, but

not a whit discouraged, it set about the business once more, and this ninth time it succeeded and got to the top of the wall. "Now," said the King, "I believe that I shall be beaten eight times, but that I shall conquer the ninth." And so it fell out. He did conquer his enemies in the ninth battle, and reigned long and gloriously afterwards. Now, dear children, I want you to be like that spider. Not that I promise you that you will completely conquer your besetting sin the ninth time you try; no, nor yet, perhaps, the ninety-ninth time: but you will do it at last, as surely as God's promises are true. He says, "Ask, and it shall be given you, knock, and it shall be opened." But He does not say how many times you will have to ask, nor how often you will have to knock. However, begin at once; and when unhappily you do give way to a temptation, do not lose a moment in beginning again. You know it says in the Prayer Book that, "through the weakness of our nature, we cannot always stand upright." But if you are sometimes thrown down, that is no reason why you should lie on the ground when you are thrown down. Yes; ask God's grace, in the first place that you may not fall, but in the next, that, if you do, when you fall you may also rise.

And to you, dearest Sisters, I could say nothing in itself different, however different the words might be, from that which I have now

told our children. God give you all grace, them no less than you, so to pass with your dear Lord through this valley of humiliation, that we may be counted worthy to see the King in His beauty in the joy of our Easter.

READING XII.*

"And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."
S. Mark xiii. 37.

I will tell you a story, my children, to begin with; and it shall be a true one.

About a hundred years ago, when the English and French were fighting in North America, both of them wickedly used to hire the savage Indian tribes to help themselves in the war. The English army was encamped on a certain plain; it was autumn, and the nights were long. The sentinels were set all round the camp, with their watch-fires as usual, to give alarm in case of any attack. One morning, the sentinel at a particular post was found dead and cold, stabbed with an Indian knife in the back. It was thought he must have fallen asleep, and his comrades said that he was justly punished: for, as you know, it is death for a soldier to sleep at his post. And very justly too; because the carelessness of one sentinel may destroy a whole army. But the next morning, the sentinel was again found dead at that same post, and in that same manner, stabbed in the back. It seemed impossible that two soldiers should have slept on two following nights, especially when the

* Preached the Second Sunday in Lent.

second one had such a fearful warning before him. But it seemed quite as impossible that an English soldier, with his loaded musket and fixed bayonet, could have been attacked and killed, if awake, by an Indian. The whole thing made, as you may imagine, a great noise in the camp. The third night, one of the steadiest men in the regiment was told off as sentinel in that place, and went to his duty determined to find out the mystery. Well; what was the surprise in the camp when, next morning, he also was found stabbed in the same way! The General in command said that he could not afford to have his men sacrificed thus; and therefore, that the following night, which was the fourth, two soldiers should be together in the watch. But a young officer went to him, and begged to be allowed to take it himself; he said, it was a disgrace that two Englishmen should be needed to fight an Indian. The General at last, very unwillingly, gave his consent, and the officer took his place. You may imagine how carefully he looked to the spring of his musket, and to the fixing his bayonet; and how, as his watch went on, he took care to keep plenty of fir-logs burning on his fire. Well; in the deadest time of the night, between two and three o'clock, he noticed, about twenty yards off, a large black hog, rooting up the ground this way and that, after the manner of those beasts. But hogs were very

common in that country, so he thought little about the matter, and quietly continued walking up and down his beat. Presently he noticed the animal again, this time about ten yards from him, very busy in feeding. Still he went on walking up and down for a few minutes more; and, behold, there was the creature again, this time not more than five yards from him. And moreover he observed that whatever way he turned his back in walking, the thing, though still rooting up the ground diligently, moved a little closer in that direction. "I don't quite like the looks of that beast," he said to himself; and so he levelled his musket and fired. And an Indian sprang up with a wild yell, and fell dead on the spot. It seems that he had disguised himself in a hog-skin, and, as all Indians have such wonderful power of imitating animals, he contrived to get close up to the poor sentinels without their suspecting anything, and then, when their back was turned, to leap on and stab them. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

That was rather a longer story than I intended to make it: but if it helps you to understand the text better, it is well.

Now then, I think that the hearts of every one of us are like a camp, round which guards and sentinels must be set. Just as a camp contains many soldiers, who are bound to serve their king, so our hearts have a great many

different powers (have they not?), by all of which we ought to serve God. And I am sure we have enemies enough who seek to destroy us: and against each of these we have to set a sentinel, as it were, to keep watch. Every one of the ten Commandments tells us of such an enemy: disobedience, hatred, anger, envy, impurity, sloth, gluttony, stealing, wasting time, falsehood, covetousness. Yes; we have to watch against all. But there is one of these in particular about which I always have spoken to you on the second Sunday in Lent, and about which I always will speak as long as God shall spare me; and many another Priest at this very same time is so speaking to his children. And mind, God gives us all His Commandments alike. I have no right to say, I will speak to my dear children about this and this; but about that and that I will not, because it is so difficult, because it gives me so much pain.

Now; what do the services of this Sunday tell us about? The Epistle says that God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. The Gospel is about the poor woman whose daughter was grievously vexed with a devil: so it is, where we read it in S. Matthew; but in S. Mark it is written, that she had an *unclean* spirit: and we know, by the example of S. Mary Magdalene, that sometimes one who had sinned so, was seized by an evil spirit. The Collect prays, "that we may be defended

from all adversities which may happen to the body:" and what greater adversity than ever to forget that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost? "and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul." And the First Lesson for Evening Service, is about Dinah and her miserable fall. So, you see, what I am going to speak to you about is Purity.

Ah, my children! looking, from the beginning, at all of you now here, or that have been here, you have given me a great deal of pain, *and* a great deal of pleasure. Thank God, I may say it boldly, more pleasure, certainly more pleasure, than psin. And I have thanked Him indeed for this; that more than one of you, now out at service, has thanked me for speaking to them both by themselves, and, as they said, on that Sunday in Lent, about Purity.

Now, I have often told you before how S. Paul puts this grace first of all God's graces, when he makes out, as several times he does, a catalogue or list of Christian graces. Why? Because it is that which keeps us from the sin which God hates more than any other; next, because that sin, so many Saints have taught us, will drag down more souls to hell at the Last Day than all others put together.

Think of my story again for a moment. The great danger came to those sentinels because they were not quite on the watch. Had they seen a man, then they would have been ready;

but only to see a beast, and that beast, seemingly, feeding; what danger from that?

Now, my children, think of this. Remember that great and good king, the man after God's own heart, David. On one miserable, miserable afternoon, he who had said, "Turn away mine eyes lest they behold vanity," let them rest for half a minute on what they should not have seen. And what followed? This is now nearly three thousand years ago. Three thousand years! What kings and kingdoms have passed away, and been forgotten! What battles have been fought that are now scarcely known by name! How many most holy and loving deeds have been done which will never be known till the end of all things! How many Martyrs have been burnt, have been eaten by wild beasts, have been torn on the rack, whose very names are forgotten! But, not this sin! Here, up to this very day, in the writings of those unhappy men who say in their hearts, "There is no God," David's sin is always dwelt on. "*This* is the man after God's own heart! *This* is he whose Psalms you so dearly love!" Might not the prophet Nathan, speaking from God, well say, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme!" And how little could David have told what the blasphemy would be!

What should any of you feel now, my own children, were she told that, because she looked

at something she ought not to have looked at, therefore, three thousand years hence (that is, in the year four thousand eight hundred and sixty-three), men should blaspheme God? What, that her name would be a warning to girls like herself? This I believe, that were it told her by an Angel that so it would be, she would die of grief and shame.

Not now; but the time will come when those of you who go out to service may well be tempted to look at that you never ought to look at; may be asked to read stories, or magazines, or weekly papers, which are utterly loathsome, utterly horrible, utterly doing the work of Satan. Now, my children, as you care for your souls, listen to me. If ever you light upon, or have offered to you, a newspaper which makes light of evil even, put it from you as you would a serpent. I will tell you what happened to me when I was travelling some time ago. There were, in the same part of the carriage, a servant girl, as I took it, an old man, and one or two others. The old man was reading a newspaper with prints. When he had studied it through and through, he offered it very civilly and politely to the girl, saying that she might like to look at the pictures. She took it, looked at it for a moment; and then I saw the blood come up into her face, and she gave it back to him with such a *No!* and looked away from him. When we stopped at the next place, she was at home;

and then I asked this man if he would be so kind as to lend me the paper. He did so, rather unwillingly: and when I had cast my eyes on it,—my children, how I should have blessed God had you acted as that girl did.

But now see this. There is one text of S. Paul's, which teaches us much more than we learn from it at once. Where he is speaking of the sins which Christians ought to flee from, he ends, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which is not convenient." Now people generally read that, as if it meant that the jesting were not convenient. No, it takes in all: all the three. Filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, are all, not convenient. And, my children, see how well and truly that great Apostle, S. Paul, spoke of those temptations, just the same, I suppose, in his time as now. The first, filthiness: that means the allowing in any way any action which the whole world might not see. The next, foolish talking, means in the Greek much more than foolish, it means downright wrong talking. And I believe,—more than that, I feel sure,—that to neither of these would any of you, when you leave us, give way at once. But then comes the jesting. And I will tell you what that means. It means, in the first place, the minding being laughed at because you are so very particular, so very straitlaced: and about that, too, I hope, my children, that any one girl of

you who really is in earnest, would not (even suppose she could not help minding it a little) trouble herself very much about. But then, the other sense is this: for you partly know now, and the longer you live you will know better, how cunning is Satan, how you may have a thing said to you which in one sense is perfectly innocent and good, but which is meant also to have another sense to you, which is just the opposite of innocent and the opposite of pure.

Now, my children,—and the older you grow you will understand this the better,—the best wish, the most earnest prayer I could make for you, would be this: that you should be as much as possible ignorant of evil. But then: it was a great Saint of old who said it, and he said it speaking to girls as I now am to you: there is your great danger, how to treat a speech which may have a good sense, but which you, in your heart, believe not to be meant so. And what that Saint said to his children then, I now say to you: you remember good King Hezekiah's words when the Assyrians were blaspheming the God of Israel in a language which more than half the Jews could not understand, "Answer him not."

And now, one thing more: to-day I have spoken of one watch that we have to keep; of one sentinel that we have to set. Well; if one thing, when we come to work it out, when we

try to look thoroughly into it, seems so hard; what great need have we to take care of looking as David says, to all our steps; of every hour, and every minute of our lives, trusting to God's help, and not to our own; of remembering the last commandment of our dear Lord to the multitude while He was on earth, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch!"

READING XIII.*

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
S. Matt. v. 8.

Some of you, my children, know, what I have said before, that, on this second Sunday in Lent, there is one subject on which, as long as it pleases God to spare us to each other, I will always speak to you. The Church teaches us about that to-day, in the Epistle; also in the afternoon Lesson. And what the Church does, her Priests ought to do. If there were not some especial day fixed, the natural temptation would be (to use the common word) to *shirk* it altogether. I am referring to the grace of Purity.

Now;—and first I speak to you, my children; you, who in God's good Providence will, in due time, go out to service, will most certainly have to make up your mind that temptations will come, and that the turning point of your lives may be, how you meet each. One little, one very tiny mistake at the beginning, a mistake as to what you ought to say, or ought to do: and it may make the difference, between honour, and respect, and God's dear service in this world,—or, what I cannot bear to think of

* To the girls of S. Margaret's and S. Agnes', the Second Sunday in Lent, 1864.

as regards any of you! Look here: I have been on a mountain ridge, where the stable of the inn, in which I was putting up, had a roof, just like any roof of a house in England. If a drop of rain came down, how little matter it would seem to those who knew nothing further, whether it fell on this side of the ridge, or on that! And what was the real matter? This difference: if it fell one quarter of an inch here, it went into a little stream, which led into a little river, which led into a larger river, which led into a great river, which fell into the Mediterranean: if on the other side, by the same steps it got, or would get, into the Atlantic. That is, a quarter of an inch difference to-day; and this day week those two little drops may be thousands of miles apart. And so with regard to you. You go out to service: you have something said to you which a Christian girl ought to shrink from. Well: you either do so shrink from it; so show that you do: or you laugh, or even smile. Ah, my children! and the difference may be, from that one little this or that, which I said just now,—on the one side, true, good, honest service: perhaps, in time, true, good, honest love: perhaps, in time, dear home ties and home love rising round you: or——

Or, such a life as I will not speak of: or worse, to get out of that life, that death which some—ah me! which many—have chosen in

preference: a death by their own hands; caring only for this, that, as a great poet says,

"Glad to be
Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world!"

Yes, my children: and for you too of the upper school. It may be also that you will be tempted, as so many in the same rank of life have been. And you, perhaps, rather in a different way. As you go out into the world, you will learn, I fear, I sadly fear, more than you now know of what I am about to say. But remember this: if ever you, any of you, have a sentence said to you, which *may* have a perfectly good sense, but which (though you do not understand how) you feel was not so meant: then God gives you your feminine instinct to be your guide and your guard. Ah! I so sadly remember what I once heard from one who began life quite as brightly, quite as earnestly, quite with as much determination to serve God as any of you can have; (she is gone now, poor thing!) "The first occasion of my fall was this: I had something said to me which I did not understand; but I felt that he who said it meant it badly, though it *might* mean well. I had not courage to say I was offended: I smiled: and that smile cost me"—what afterwards she would have given worlds to regain.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall *see* God." But what does this mean?

we know, when our dear Lord shall come again to judge the world, *every* eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

Well; no doubt it especially means that the pure in heart shall have the nearest and dearest place to Him there.

But it means more. It means that they shall see Him even here. It means that the more any one tries after that great grace of Christian Modesty, the more, even in this world, they shall see how God it is, Who rules all the changes and chances of their lives: the more they shall see Him in outward things; and in [their souls and hearts too, which shall be His dear Temples.]

And then remember: all these Beatitudes are true the contrary way. If, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God; then, Cursed are the impure in heart, for they shall *not* see God. That is: most especially, most particularly, most above all others, they shall be shut out from His Sight, here and hereafter. If there is one sin above another which blinds our eyes, and deafens our ears, it is that of impurity. He, that spotless Lamb of God, Who condescended to have it said of Him that He cast out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils, never allowed one slightest suspicion of this sin to dwell on His infinitely glorious Name.

Now: something else. I am speaking to

you, my children: all of one sex: all, more or less, of one age. See the safeguard that God especially gives you. You might well say: Why is this sin of impurity so much worse in women than in men? It might be a very difficult question to answer. Perhaps, in the sight of God, it is not worse. But the worse it is thought by the world, do you not see how that makes your especial safeguard? So God has ordered: and He has ordered it as a help to you. We know that, let a woman once lose that grace: and, in almost all cases, all are gone. It somehow does not so fall out with men. But look here. We should never think it a real *sin* in a woman, only a fault, to be *cowardly*. I earnestly hope better things for all of you:—but still, if your fancy were to turn poor quiet cows into raging bulls or the like, I should not call it a sin. Those of your own sex who have done so have, nevertheless, suffered Martyrdom joyfully. But in a man it would be very different. If he were a coward in the one case, he could not be a Martyr in the other. Why? I can only say again, because so God has ordered it.

Then: is not that a help to you? "If ever, if ever, I should, even by words only, lose my character as a modest Christian woman: even the world would make it very difficult to me to regain it." And, to say one word to all of you together, which I would rather say to each of

you separately; if about words, ought it not so to be about thoughts?

There, my children, I have done my duty by speaking plainly to you this Lent. Thank God, one such Sermon once saved one of you, under God's great Love, from a terrible sin. He keep you all, whether by any poor words of mine, or how else may please Him, from any shadow of it!

And now, &c.

READING XIV.*

"Who will hearken unto you in this matter? But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike." 1 SAMUEL XXX. 24.

Do you remember, my children, how, when God was calling His own people Israel to their Lent, after He had said, "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, assemble the elders," He goes on, "Gather the children?" And perhaps you do not remember how, when the great army of the Ammonites and Moabites came up against Jerusalem in the days of that good King Jehoshaphat, and there seemed no help from man—how, when all the people were gathered together in prayer, it is written in the Book of Chronicles, "All Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children."

So now for a lesson as regards you. You know that, in the very middle of this Lent, we wish to give up two days altogether to God. And though you cannot join in this: because neither are you old enough, nor have you the power, to enter into it yourselves: yet you may very much help in it; and if you do so help —— Well; I will tell you a story to show how you yourselves will have part of the reward.

* Preached the Third Sunday in Lent, 1863.

There was once a poor shepherd boy, who, from the time that he was quite young, had God's especial grace with him. In the book where his history is written, I have read that one day there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock. And this child, instead of leaving that flock and thinking of his own safety, went after these two beasts, and set upon the fiercest of them, the lion, and took him by the beard, and killed him, and so saved the lamb out of his mouth. At that time the king of the country where this shepherd boy lived, had done many evil things in the sight of God: and because that was so, it was told this boy that, in God's good time, he should be king over this people. But before he became king, he had to go through all manner of trouble; and when the wicked king, that then was, hunted after him to put him to death, he had a little faithful company of soldiers with him, who kept guard over him as well as they could, and who fought for him in all his battles.

Now, my children, I come to what has to do with you. Once on a time, the city where he and his little band of men lived was taken and burnt while they were at a distance from it, and all their wives and children were carried away by their enemies. At last, and not without much trouble before, they determined to pursue after these enemies; and so they did.

This man, once the shepherd-boy, who was afterwards to be the king, had but six hundred soldiers; and when they came to follow these cruel enemies of theirs, two hundred were so tired that they had to stay behind, while the other four hundred went on. And when these four hundred had conquered the enemy's army, and taken again all that they had lost, and very much of riches, and of precious things besides, and were come back again to the two hundred who were so tired, they said at first, "We who went out to the battle ought to have everything that we then took. These, who only stayed behind and took care of the baggage, shall have nothing except their own wives and their own children." But that wise king said to them: "It shall not be so, the one and the other shall share and share alike:" and that became a law in his nation from that time for many hundred years.

Some of you, my children, know who it is of whom I have been telling you this story; and the others may try to find it out in the Bible. But this is what it has to do with you. You cannot help the Sisters in doing what they now will have to do, by being with them, or praying with them, or listening with them. No; but you can help them in this way. If, during these two days, you give no trouble, you make no noise, you never worry those who are in the Oratory by making them think, "I wonder

what that is that is going on outside:" then, I fairly think you will have your reward too. Now then is the time to show that you will do your best for those who have done a great deal for you. Here, now, in this Oratory, that is the only way that I should like to, or that I can, speak to you in. I would rather tell you how much I, for one, and how much I know that we all, trust in you; and ask you to show how much you can prove that you deserve our trust in this next forty-eight hours. Yes; of course it is difficult to keep quiet; of course you would rather have leave to do what, at other times, you may do in the way of making a noise in your play. But there is not one among you here, who does not understand me when I say that this is just the self-denial you have to offer to God this Lent. We talk about Fasting. Now, then, as Fasting is only one kind of self-denial, so this shall be your Fast, after seven this evening, to show how quiet, how thoughtful, how obedient you can be. Such a little thing! No, it is not such a little thing. Nothing that we have to do because we ought, and for our dear Lord's sake, is little. I once told you how, about the same time, I knew two persons; the one a rich man (and a good man too) who built a Church at his own expense; but I suppose that the money which he gave did not oblige him to deny himself in any one way. He had it to spend, and he might have spent it

on his own pleasure, and he rather laid it out in God's service. And he did well. But at the same time I knew of a servant girl, who, being about the age of the eldest of you, got up of her own accord, though she was not very strong, through the whole of a bitterly cold winter, that she might light the fires and so on, which the housemaid, who ought to have lighted them, could not have done without making a bad cough, which she had, worse and worse, and perhaps losing her life. I remember then envying, if I may so use the word, the rich man who built the Church: and I believe (then I was only twelve years old) that I thought nothing at all about that poor girl. Both of them have since been taken out of this world; and I hope both of them have been received into Paradise: but so far as these two works are concerned, the building the Church, or the lighting those fires, I know which now, beyond all comparison, I would rather have done.

And so to end, my children; this I say, that to be quiet, and steady, and obedient in these next days, may seem a little thing to you; but if you do it because you wish to please our dear Lord, it will not be a little thing in His sight; for you know how He said, that only to give a cup of cold water, for His sake, to a poor child, should in no wise lose its reward.

READING XV.*

'Of Thine Own have we given Thee." 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

It is a long time since I have told you a story. This afternoon then, with God's help, you shall have one; in one sense only a story, in another, oh! so true of all of you!

There once lived a King who had a very large empire. His great wish was to make all His subjects happy; but He had enemies, who used to attack His people, sometimes by open force, sometimes by deceit and guile, which was much worse. Now this King's desire was that, in good time, all the people should go and live in His chief City; and if His friend tells us true, a wonderful place that must be. You know travellers do tell strange stories: but I have a very old Book, in which one of that King's friends, speaking about this City, says, that each several gate is a separate pearl. And I am told that another traveller, who had been there, and who had for once come back again, (for, as a general rule, those once received into that happy City, could no more go out,) said thus, that eye had not seen, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive what that King had prepared for His true subjects.

* Read on the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

More than that: I have read in a Life of the Son of that King, that He, when once He was travelling through His Father's provinces (and by all that ever I have heard, He was most cruelly treated while He did so travel through them), that He said, It was better to tear out an eye, or cut off a hand or a foot, if so we might get into the Golden City (that was its name), than not get in there at all.

I could tell you stories without number of what this good King and His Son did for His people. But one thing this afternoon especially comes into my mind.

Among other dear proofs of this King's love, He was dearly fond of children: and about four such I am now going to speak. They were orphans—all of one family, so as to be cousins; two boys there were, and two girls. The names of the boys, Urban and Vincent: the names of the girls, Dorothea and Amanda. Their fathers and mothers had, some time since, been sent for by the King, to live in this City of which I have told you; at least so men thought and said and hoped.

These children lived together in a cottage, far, far off from the Royal City; they hoped some day to go there too, but I do not know that up to that time they had taken any particular pains to please the great Lord of that City.

I must tell you that this King had a great

number of messengers, whom He used to send out on His errands. I have been told that the chariots of this great King are twenty thousand; also, He has many servants, who go on foot to do His will.

It was one of these who, in the beginning of a summer day, presented himself to the four children. Very lovely he was, very glorious: they knew at once who he was, and whence he came. But *why*: that they knew not till he spoke.

"My children," said he, "this is but a poor hovel that you have to live in; and our good and loving King,—mine as well as yours,—wishes to call you where your father and mother are. You know what kind of place that is: a place where there is no want of any good thing upon the earth."

"Take us to Him!" cried one or two. "Yes: but how? It is more than we can ever do, it is such a terrible, such a long journey."

"Yes," said the messenger, "it is indeed. You never could in your own strength get to the Golden City. But I will tell you what He requires; and He never requires anything which He does not give power to do one way or another. Now, come outside the cottage."

They did so.

Now nigh at hand was a steep rock: very steep, very pointed; but yet to careful and

brave climbers, very possible to be ascended, ay, to the very top.

"Do you see this rock?" asked the kind messenger.

"Every day of our lives we do," replied Amanda.

"What do you call it?" again the messenger asked.

"I have heard it called," Urban said, "by the name of *Duty*."

"Have you ever been at the top?"

"At the top!" Urban cried out. "Never, never! How could we? Never half way, nor a quarter, nor a half quarter. How could we? It is quite beyond our power."

"Yet younger children," said the King's messenger, "have done so. But first of all, come with me."

Now I saw that the messenger took them to a pool, that was hard at hand, into which, I was told, a certain Tree had once been cast, which gave marvellous virtue to its waters. Of these waters he poured on their heads; and then he led them back to the foot of the rock.

"Now, my children," he said, "listen to me. The day after to-morrow the King will send for you. If you have certain presents for Him that He desires, you will dwell once more with your own father and mother, only near Him and in the happiness of the full Court."

"Presents!" cried poor little Dorothea. "What presents can we give Him?"

"Let us try at all events," cried Urban; "I know——"

"Silence!" said the messenger, not unkindly, but commandingly; "you *can* only know what He tells you through me, and such as me. You have nothing of your own to give Him. But this is what you will do. You will climb to the top of this rock——"

"Oh, how can we?" cried little Dorothea.

The messenger smiled on her kindly: "Because," he said, "when you had the water of that pool poured over you, it braced and strengthened you up: before you could not; now you can. But listen. At the top of that rock I shall be waiting for you with one present for the King. It may seem to you worthless: that is not your concern; bring that down, and keep it: and it will be what He desires."

"Is that all?" asked Amanda.

"All!" replied the messenger, gravely; and then, speaking sadly, "*All?*—Ah! and hard, hard enough! But if you ask the question, this much I may tell you. In going up that mountain you may see many pretty little crystals and brightly-coloured pebbles: those the King will accept too: will accept—will be pleased with; but only on this condition, that also you bring that which He has appointed for you to offer—which I shall be appointed to give you at the

top of the rock. But remember what I say; whatever you find there—worthless in your eyes or not, worse, perhaps, than of no use, that is what He will require from you. Now farewell; to-morrow begin your ascent and the day after to-morrow I shall come for you."

You may imagine how the children talked over with each other the presents which they were to bring to the King: wondering what would be given to them; thinking how difficult and steep the rock looked; and longing for the morrow, that they might begin their task.

The morrow came, and they set forth. Let us see what Dorothea did, and what she received. It was a much harder, steeper climb than she had ever expected: sometimes the loose stones rolled away from under her feet, and more than once caused her to fall; sometimes the brambles tore her dress, and in getting free from them, she wounded her poor little hands: and the sun shone out fiercely, and the steep ascent made her heart beat, and her lungs pant: but still she kept on, seeing nothing of the others, thinking only of her own way, and that quite enough. And at last, when several times she had thought; "this that I am now coming to must be the top;" and had then been disappointed by seeing higher ground stretching away beyond—at last, I say, she did reach the very summit, marked by a tall stone Cross. At

the foot of this, true to his word, sat the King's messenger.

"Well and bravely done, my child," he said; "I have been watching you this long time. It was a hard steep struggle: but you will find that it was gloriously worth while to make it. Take this ring; that it is which is to be your present when you stand before the King. And beware how you go down the mountain: if it is easier, it is also more dangerous."

Dorothea received the ring, a plain gold ring, put it on her finger, and turned to depart. True, the path was here and there dangerous to those that walked heedlessly: but it was to be observed that, in the most dangerous places, those bright diamond-like crystals were mostly strewn, of which the messenger had spoken the day before. And remembering his words, that while she must bring to tbe King the present which He Himself had prepared for her, she might, if she so would, offer Him also some of these, and that He would accept them; she picked up one here, another there, well looking to her steps all the while, so that, by the time evening had come down, and she reached her home, she had a little basket full, which she hoped the good King would not reject.

When she entered the cottage, tired and worn out, but glad in her very heart, she found Amanda already arrived: and she, too, had her basket of presents, larger and fairer to the

sight than Dorothea's. But what had she been doing?

She too had struggled up the mountain; not so patiently and quietly, though, as her sister. She was angry when the brambles tore her; vexed when the treacherous stones rolled from under her feet; annoyed when the sun shone fiercely, even more annoyed when a sudden squall of wind and rain drove full in her face. However, she did reach the top, and there, as before, was the King's messenger.

"This, my child," he said, "is to be your present."

She drew back her hand. It was a little wooden Cross, but wreathed with nettles.

"I cannot carry that," she answered, in a voice half of vexation, half of fear.

"Listen to me," he said again. Take it bravely, it will hurt at first—I must speak the exact truth—it *will* hurt at first, but only for a short time. Believe what I say: grasp it firmly, and the smart will soon pass away. It is not my choice for you; it is the King's: and He knows what is best and dearest for you."

She took it, I am afraid, rather sullenly, and began to go down the hill. I dare say the pain *was* rather sharp at first. I dare say her hand did smart. But little patience she had to bear the sting. She had scarcely passed over the brow of the mountain, when she said out loud, "This is past endurance," and flung the cross

away. Ah! foolish child! I wonder if I know any who at this moment——

But to go on.

"At all events," she thought to herself, "I will make up. There are plenty of these gems that lie about; if I get together a good number, the King will be quite as well pleased as if I brought the two little bits of wood, and that only by blistering my hands."

My children, two little bits of wood, if they only make your Cross, and hands blistered by bearing that Cross, may be an offering—you little know of how much value—in the eyes of the King of kings.

Thus it was that Amanda came home: thus it was that Dorothea heard her story.

"Oh, Amanda!" she cried; "what have you done? You *know* what the messenger said. You remember how plainly and clearly he told us that unless we first bring the present the King Himself has given us back to Him, nothing else will be pleasing to Him."

"Yes, yes; *I* heard, Dorothea, as well as you. But now your ring, that *is* worth something. But two bits of wood, with a vile weed——"

"O Amanda, I don't think you should so speak of anything that the King sends."

"Well, a weed, then; what can He care for such things? You must have taken a great deal of pains over your little basket; but I

think you must allow that my crystals are the largest and the brightest."

"Allow it? They are indeed! I only wish I could have found such as you have found. But still, Amanda, you will not be angry, will you? If I say that I am almost afraid——"

"No, I will not be angry; for you shall not say any more. You are tired, and so am I; to-morrow we shall know whom the King will accept most dearly."

Now of Vincent I have not much to tell you. He did slowly, carefully, though not doing the very best he might have done, climb the mountain. There he too found the messenger; and received for his present that was to be, what do you suppose? a mere common stone.

I think that if Dorothea had received this, she would have been all the more eager to find some of those precious crystals that lay by the way. "Since that dear King has loved me so much, oh, what can I do to show my love for Him?"

But Vincent took that which was given him carefully, reverently, quietly; and went down the hill, scarcely stopping here and there to gather up a little gem.

So the three met: he, Dorothea, and Amanda. And as yet Urban had not come. While they were wondering what this might mean, a light footstep outside, an eager hand on the door, and he entered.

"Oh how late I am, am I not?" he said.

"Well, and what have you?"

"Why," he answered, "why, what should you say, if I had nothing?"

"Nothing;" cried Vincent in terror, "how nothing?"

"Because I have never been up the mountain at all."

"Oh, Urban! Urban! what do you mean?" cried dear little Dorothea.

"Just what I say: I ought to have gone. I know that just as well as you: and I will go. But I was asked to go to the sports in the Town garden. They," and he nodded his head that way—"they only last for to-day, and I did not like to refuse."

"And how will you meet the King?" asked Amanda, who began to be frightened for herself.

"Oh! that I have settled. I shall be up first thing to-morrow: and by the time the messenger comes, I shall be back. You shall see I will. Good-night, I am very tired."

The children were all sleeping. There was one line of grey light in the East. Suddenly a loud knock at the door!

"It is I, the King's messenger. Let me in." Dorothea opened the door.

"The King has sent for you; Come at once."

Even Dorothea felt rather frightened. Vin-

cent was terribly alarmed. Amanda still trusted in the beauty of her jewels. But Urban——

"O sir! O good kind sir! do wait for two hours: or only one hour; I am not ready—I will be ready then. O sir, for your kind love wait!"

"I cannot," the messenger answered. "Ready or not, you must go." And as he laid his hand on them, they felt it was so indeed: go they must.

And now I see them standing outside a glorious Palace; more glorious than heart can think. The outer gate is opened, and Dorothea is called for.

She goes in by herself. And presently all the bells of the City where that Palace stands begin to ring most sweetly; and word is brought out that the King has said: "She shall walk with me in white, for she is worthy."

Then is Vincent summoned in; and presently the bells in like manner, though not so joyfully, peal out.

Then comes the turn of Urban. Pale and trembling he enters: and there is a long pause. Then the door opens again, and certain of the King's servants bear him out, having bound him hand and foot, to the terrible prison that is to be seen far off, dimly and darkly. I am told that, when the King had heard his story, He only said, "Depart from me."

And Amanda? I do not know. She was

guilty of a dreadful fault; she made a terrible mistake. But whether the King had mercy on her or not, I cannot tell.

There is my story. I should like you at S. Agnes', my children, and you here, each of you, next Sunday to bring the meaning of it, one from each house; so that we may talk it over, and in the meantime, GOD give you all grace to choose the better part, which can never be taken away from you!

READING XVI.

"What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isa. v. 4.

You know, my dear children, Who it is That says this, and of whom He is speaking. It is our dear Lord Who speaks, and He is telling us of a vineyard that He had in a very fruitful hill: and how He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

Now, I think that I have not to look very far before I see one little vineyard that He has taken a great deal of pains with; watched over very carefully and very tenderly, and that I am now watching to see whether all this care and love will answer; what kind of fruit this vineyard will bring forth, good or bad: how it will answer its training, how it will reward those who are taking care of it.

And first, shall I tell you one thing? It often makes me very anxious, when I see how hard Satan is trying to get some one of you to belong to him; and when I see how little you sometimes resist, I am frightened lest all that is done for you should only add to your condemnation at last. But let us see: you, like all of us, began this Lent, determining that it should be the best and holiest season you ever passed.

But remember, Lent is made up of separate

days. Think for a moment about this. God has so ordered it for all of you that you should be invited, expected, desired to give some time to prayer daily. You may be told to say your prayers, but no one can make you *pray*. Your Mother, dearly as she loves you, has no power in this. I, earnestly as I long that you may be our Lord's dear children, can only wish this, cannot make it. Did you say a certain form of words—you know parrots and magpies and starlings can be taught to say words—and that all? Or was it a little better than so? And did you really for a time try to pray, but for the greater part of the time let your thoughts go where they would?

Well; now here is another question. David says, "Behold, how good and joyful a thing it is: brethren, to dwell together in unity!" He would not say this, unless it were a difficult thing to do. And so indeed it is: but then, children even, who have determined to do something to show their love to our Lord, must expect and be ready to do difficult things. Now I wonder if there have been, I will not say any quarrels, but only the least disagreement between any of you to-day: and if there be, whether you tried at once to remember the text —*at once*, remember, "forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you."

Now, the next question which would help me to judge whether the vineyard is bearing such

fruit as it ought, is whether—I should be ashamed to ask the question for to-day, so I will ask it of the time since I last talked to you—any of you have been tempted, and yielded to the temptation, to say what was not exactly and entirely true? If not, then so far, I am truly thankful; that is a great step in the service of God.

But suppose I go on to something else, and ask how far you have all shown to each other what the Bible calls *Courtesy*, but which we now generally call being *obliging*, that is, giving up your own way in little, very little matters. You are asked to lend something that it is a little trouble to you to get, and you answer crossly: you are asked to do something which interrupts what you are about, and you say you cannot give up the business you have in hand. Ah! what very little, trifling things they are! So they are: but yet quite enough to tell what way your thoughts and resolutions are going; whether they are set on pleasing and serving our LORD, or set only on pleasing and serving yourselves.

This sort of things comes over and over again. That is what makes them such good proofs of what you are really endeavouring to do.

[*Prayer*—I hope, for yourselves: and for others also: the Mother, the children, myself; lessons, household work, play.]

Dearest Sisters, it is the same way that we are all treading. I may tell our children of their duties in different words: but does not the same thing apply to you? The higher aim, the greater help, the closer walk with God,—it is as true as the intellectual difference. But still earnestness of prayer, perfect self-denial, the duty of intercession, that I have been pressing on our dear children; might I not have pressed the same on you too?

Yes, it is the same road, for one and the other; the child of Bethlehem began the path which the Man of Sorrows finished on Calvary. Oh, that some day we all—you, my sisters, and they—may so have run with patience the race set before us, that we may be counted worthy of the Crown promised to the conquerors for His sake: Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth ever one God, world without end. Amen.

READING XVII.*

"My Well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." ISA. v. 1, 2.

IF you had been with me, my children, in France or Germany, you would understand this text, and others in the Bible that speak about vineyards, better than now. However, let me see what I can do to make them plainer to you.

Now, in this parable of Isaiah, it says that the Lord of the vineyard fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine. I have in my mind one vineyard at this time, which I will tell you of, because it will help you to understand the whole matter. This vineyard is one of the best in Europe. It stands on the sloping side of the Rhine, facing the southern sun, and is called the *Côte Rôtie*, that is, the Roasted Side, because that sun has such great power, darting down all its rays upon the place.

I dare say you think that very choice vines grow in a very good rich soil? No: never. They grow in a very poor sandy soil, where no-

* Read to the Girls of the Orphanage, June, 1861.

thing else but weeds will grow. And to prevent the roots from striking deeply down, and trying to find better earth, the vine-dressers put tiles underneath them, so that they can only run down a little way.

Now, if you are compared to God's vineyard, what kind of ground, so to speak, are your hearts? Are they good by nature? Are they apt to bear much fruit? You know better: how, of themselves, they are quite barren: how they can neither do nor think anything that is good. Is not, then, this like the bad ground of the vineyard? And, just as when the roots of the vines seem to be going too far into the earth, the wise husbandman puts something under them that prevents them striking downward: so when any of God's servants are growing too fond of this world, what does He do? He sends them something which takes away all their pleasure in it. You remember your companion whom we so lately lost: and who, I well believe, is now with her Lord. Had she lived, it is very possible that she might have been taken up with the cares, and business, and pleasures of the world; that she might have been admired, that she might have forgotten God, that she might have fallen into folly and sin. And what then? Therefore our Lord said, No. This shall not be. I will first take away all her pleasure in this life; and then I will call her to Myself.

But what makes these vineyards so choice? Because they get so much of the heat of the sun. The ground is never cool. By day, the earth is like an oven; and even by night it has not time to lose its heat. Therefore the precious juice of the vine *works*, as they say, by day and night, ripening, sweetening, being perfected, always.

And what is it that makes Christians what they are? Is it not the Sun of Righteousness, their dear Lord? The more He shines on them, the more they look to Him, are they not the better? Do they not bring forth more fruit?

Again: something else. Perhaps you think that these vineyards are beautiful to look at. Not at all. The vines are like poor, stunted gooseberry bushes. Our Lord, you know, calls Himself the True Vine; and yet it is said of Him in Isaiah that He hath neither form nor comeliness (that is, as far as the world judges); and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. The best vines are what those who know nothing of the matter would call the ugliest. Ah! my children, and sometimes God's best vines, His dearest children, are just those that we are most ready to pass over too!

These vineyards must be fenced. Why? First, to keep out thieves. Every one, going by, stretches out his hand for grapes. Then

dogs, when they have once tasted them, devour a great number. So do fowls: hens, and the like. And there are spoilers that no fence can keep out. Lizards, little weak things as they seem, eat up a third part of all the grapes. And are there not many and many evil beings who try to spoil all that a Christian does? If any one of you determine, this once, this day, or week, or month, now to be in earnest, now to serve God better than before: do you not know how many enemies rise up against you?

Once more. These excellent vineyards *generally* bear most precious wine. But, in some years (no one can tell why), the juice of the grapes is worth nothing. And now listen to the text. God, after telling all that He had done for His vineyard, says: "Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Why, this is worse than anything in an earthly vineyard. Vineyards here sometimes produce what is worthless, but never what is poisonous. But God's vineyards, the hearts of those whom He has made His own, often bear, not only nothing, but worse than nothing; right down, rank, deadly poison.

Now, my children, listen to me. I am not going to speak unkindly to you: but very sadly, I am.

This orphanage is a vineyard for God; is it not? It is fenced round, I think; we keep out

evil, so far as we can. We do all we know how to do. We work for you, and pray for you. And, what is the fruit?

Sometimes, God's Priests must say what God here says: "Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Now, when I came home this time, one of my first questions was (as it had been one of my chief thoughts), How my children here were going on. And do you not think that it grieved me to the heart when I heard of that sin of which so many of you were guilty, so short a time ago: the letter, I mean, which you wrote between you, and sent, between you, to the post?

I am most thankful that those of you whom I trusted most, those of you, who were most forward in God's service, had nothing to do with this. I cannot tell how I should have borne it if they had. But, of those who had!—

Now: how many of you were guitly of this, I do not know. But every one was guilty, who might have hindered it, and did not: every one was guilty, who might have spoken about it, and did not. And see what is the consequence. Oh, my children, how hard it is to do good, and how very, very easy to do mischief!

And is it not very sad that you should hinder God's work? That you who are only here

because we wish to do Him service, should try to undo what those who have the care of you work so hard to do?

I know very well that you did not mean this. You did what you did for a kind of joke, to see what would happen. Now let me tell you a story. The other day, on a railway not very far from here, a boy put down a beam of wood on the line. A very long train came by. The engine-driver, finding that he could not escape, put on all the force of the engine, and cut the log in pieces: and no one was hurt.

Well, the boy who put the log there, was had up before the magistrates. "Why did he do this? Did he not know the harm he might do? Did he not know how hundreds of people might have perished through his carelessness?"

"He never thought of that. He wanted to see what would happen to the wood: how it would fly in pieces: and therefore he did it." Was that an excuse? No: he was sent to prison for six years.

Now, my children: about the mischief you tried to do, you will never hear another word from me. I am most thankful that the older ones had nothing to do with it. For those that had, I forgive them, and I know the Sisters will, only too easily.

But oh, my children! I only wish I could teach you how much depends on you: how

much you have to bear out: how little you are like those children of whom our dear Lord said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!"

And now, &c.

READING XVIII.*

"She supposing Him to be the gardener." S. John xx. 15.

Try to imagine what that Garden was, in which was the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea. A spring garden; but not at all like the spring gardens which you are used to here in England: none of the flowers to which we are accustomed, no lawns such as we have here, for the grass would soon be parched up. But perhaps a palm-tree or two, throwing their heads high into the air, and making sweet music far above the earth: the tree called the datura, with its broad green leaves, and its flowers like silver trumpets: fig-trees also, with the fruit half ripe, and beginning to turn a glossy brown; and above all, the cactus, that strange plant which none of our English flowers at all resemble, with its clumsy, huge leaves, an inch thick, carved out as it were in green wood, covered with prickles, and sending forth lovely red flowers on a stalk three or four feet long. These were the kind of flowers which grew round the place where the Saviour of the world had lain.

And as I have often told you, the Lord's tomb was not like one of our graves dug out of the earth, but scooped sideways out of a rock,

* Easter Day, 1859.

like those rocks which you have often seen in Ashurst Wood: a great rock, rising up out of the ground, such as Isaiah had in his mind, when he spake of the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. To the mouth of this hollow recess the stone had been rolled, which now was taken away: and there stood Mary Magdalene, wondering where the Lord's Body could be taken.

And then comes the text: when she saw our Lord, she supposed Him to be the Gardener. Now, my children, was that a mistake or not? When Mary Magdalene, who loved our Lord Jesus Christ more than any other loved Him, excepting His own blessed Mother, imagined Him to be the Gardener, was she right, or was she wrong? Wrong, you will say, quite wrong. The King of kings and Lord of lords,—He That was no longer the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but the victorious Monarch Who had conquered death and hell, how could He be a poor Gardener? And I say that when we come to think, this saying of S. Mary Magdalene, if it be a mistake in one sense, may nevertheless teach us a great truth: how our dear Lord is the Gardener. For notice, it does not say, she supposing Him to have been *a* gardener, but *the* Gardener; and *the* Gardener He is; and the Gardens over which He watches are our souls: and the different flowers which spring up in them are the

different graces which he has planted there, and from which He expects good fruit.

And you remember that in one of His parables, He calls Himself by almost the same name. He calls Himself the Dresser of the vineyard, Who interceded for the barren fig-tree: "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that Thou shalt cut it down."

So that this mistake of S. Mary's was only as it were another kind of parable. Do you remember, my children, my telling you, some time ago, of the lilies which were brought to a number of children by their guardian Angels, and for the well-doing of each of which, each child had to answer? All that comes to the same thing. Every one of your hearts is a Garden belonging to God, in which, as I said, He has planted His graces, and He now waits to see what they will bring forth. What graces? And what ought they to bring forth? Love for example, is one grace; faith is another; hope, humility, patience, cheerfulness, truth, and so on. And what are they to bring forth? Why, if He has planted love there, He waits to see whether you will be ready to do any kind action to those who need it; whether you are forbearing and gentle with those who are younger or weaker than yourselves, kind to any one who is sick: above all things, not render-

ing evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. This is the kind of fruit which love ought to bear. You know that if I set a rose or a lily in an earthly garden, I can tell you what sort of flower it ought to bear when the time shall come: and so I know that when God has put into your hearts such and such graces, they ought to produce such and such effects in due season. If I set a lily in the garden now, I know that by and by there will come up a flower with snow-white leaves, rising high above the ground, and with golden-coloured anthers in the middle. So I know that because God at your Baptism gave you the grace of purity, therefore you ought to avoid and to abhor everything impure, every word or sight or action, as you would the fang of a poisonous serpent: and thus become the true lilies of our dear Lord. Again, if I set a rose in an earthly garden, I know that by and by that beautiful flower will come up with leaves within leaves of its own lovely colour, and its own delightful smell. So if God gave each of you, as He certainly did, the grace of faith at your Baptism, I know also what that ought to bring forth. I know that whenever you are in any kind of trouble or sorrow or vexation, you ought still to believe that it is only a proof of God's love; that you are bound to put all your trust in Him nevertheless: that you are to be sure that He would no more send you this sorrow, unless it

were necessary for you, than an earthly parent would give you bitter medicine unless you required it.

Now then, my children, the question is, whether our Lord, the true Gardener, does see the graces springing up in you, which He expects, and which He has a right to expect. You remember that He says to His vineyard in Isaiah: which He had fenced, which He had planted with the choicest vine, out of which He had gathered the stones: in which He had made a wine-press, and a tower to defend it from the enemies: and when it should have brought forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes, which are a deadly poison. You remember how He says that He will break down the fences, and remove the wine-press, and lay it waste; and also (saddest thing of all), that He will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it,—that is, that He will send it no more grace. And so, my children, if those Gardens of your souls bring forth no flowers and no fruit for Him, depend upon it, He will take away the privileges you have now. You know how it is now: you know the pains that are taken with you, that you may do all such good works as God has prepared for you. And for all you know, at this very Easter, our dear Lord may have interceded for you only for one year more; may be waiting now to see whether you will do more than ever you have done yet, and if He

finds that you do not, may be ready to say, "Then after that Thou shalt cut it down."

This is a happy time, this Easter-tide: but to whom? To those only who are trying to rise as their Lord rose; to set their best love, and their best desires, not on the things of this world, but on the things of that blessed place where He now is. It is but little as yet that you can understand of this: very little indeed: but what you do understand that you must try to do. Every child must try, as much as every grown person, to look upon Heaven as their own home, as their own dear home, and every situation here, every place where they live, only as a wayside inn, where they rest for a little while, and then go on to their Father's Mansion. We call it keeping Easter now; but any earthly Easter is a sad, dark Easter after all: and there is but one true and real Easter, and that is an eternal one in the Kingdom of Heaven. And there may God bring us all, for Jesus Christ's sake.

And now to God, &c.

READING XIX.*

"They that were ready went in with Him to the Marriage."
S. MATT. XXV. 10.

IT was impossible, my children, not to think of that text. There are five of you, just as there were of both the wise and foolish virgins, now called by our Lord, for the first time, to that great Feast of His own Body and Blood. You know that this is the greatest day of all your lives, and it falls on the greatest Festival of the year. God now is going to give you the utmost that He can give you. Up to last week, if ever you gave way to sin, you might think to yourselves: It is true, I have yielded to this temptation, but in time I shall have more strength; in time I shall receive the grace of Confirmation, and that will help me; and after that I shall receive the Lord's own Body, and that will again strengthen me. But now, after to-day, if you do not conquer Satan with the power you have, God has nothing else to give you. Every piece of armour that He has provided for you, you will now have put on, and if, with all these, you cannot conquer, you know how some day the sentence will be, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

* Preached at a First Communion, Easter Day, 1859.

"They that were *ready* went in." That is the question for each of you five, whether you are ready now. First, I mean, whether you have been, ever since you began to look forward to this day, trying to find out what faults you were most subject to, when and how they came, how you could best overcome them when they did come; trying to be grieved that you had so often yielded to them, so often grieved that dear Lord Jesus Christ, out of Whose glorious Passion we have just come, and so often that Holy Spirit of God Who was given to you in your Baptism. That for the past. Then, for the future, whether you are fully determined that, by God's help, you will be on His side, and not on the devil's: that this Easter Day shall turn over quite a new leaf for you: that this very hour you will begin, as you never have done before, trying to keep God's law.

If any one of you, my children, has not made up your mind to all this, even now you had better put off receiving the Blessed Sacrament. Never mind its seeming strange, never mind its looking odd; it is far better to do something which surprises people than to receive one's First Communion as Judas did, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss." The receiving our Lord's Body with your lips is the kiss you give Him, and if you go there thoughtlessly, or intending to live just as you always have done before, and to take no pains; you

will betray Him with that kiss. I say again, you had better, a thousand times better, put off your First Communion for a while, than go to it without being ready, To put it off will be sad, I know; but to go to it when you are not prepared for it, that is nothing short of ruin; that turns what ought to be the happiest, into the dismallest, day of your life.

Well: but if, after all, you can say, "I wish I could try more to serve God; I wish I could feel more to love Him: but I do try, and I know that I do love Him a little;" then, however dreadful it is when the Priest gives us His Body and Blood, Who, eighteen hundred and sixty years ago, was nailed to the Cross on Calvary, it is also a blessing and a comfort greater than any other.

Only remember what I have told you; it is generally just after we have received some great gift of God that Satan tempts us the most strongly, just as it was directly after our Lord's Baptism that Satan tempted Him in the wilderness. And so, as you may remember, it was when Tobit went down to wash himself in the river, which is a type of Baptism, that the great fish leaped on him, and would have devoured him. And where did he leap from? Out of that very same river. So it is still. I should not in the least wonder if every one of you, my children, in the course of a day or two, perhaps in the course of this very day, were to

have some fierce temptation attack you. Then remember what I tell you now. You know what the proverb says, "Forewarned, forearmed:" and so try that it may be with you.

I should very much have wished to have myself given you your First Communion, but after all, that matters very little. It is the same Lamb of God Who is sacrificed everywhere; it is the very same Body that you, and I, and all good people throughout the Church, east, west, north, and south, receive this day. And afterwards, what was said by the Chief Priests as regards the Apostles, that I should like to be said by others as concerning you; and it may be so, children though you are, no less than if you were grown up: "They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." "Had been with Jesus" in that Feast which He first made for His Apostles in the same night when He was betrayed, and then for every one of His faithful people from that time to this. "Took knowledge:" that is, that even others might see that you were trying to be so obedient, so true, so kind to each other, so pure, so unselfish, as they should be who have received Him, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:" "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

And now, my children, God bless you: and

may the pure Angels who will go with you into the Church, and worship with you the Body of Him Who is their Lord as well as yours, have the joy this day, and on all other days, of seeing that you are getting more and more fit to live with all the Angels, and with the Lord of the Angels, for ever.

And now, &c.

READING XX.*

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; that the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth." 1 SAM. iii. 1-10.

You all know this story, my dear children, I am sure; but I will just read it over to you, because I am going to show you that it has as much to do with you as it had with Samuel.

* Preached on Low Sunday, 1857.

And we must see how that can be. But first listen to the story.

God was to speak to Samuel, and to tell Him His will. Now God very often speaks to all of you, in a great many different ways, at a great many different times; let us see what some of them are. Whenever you hear His Word, He is speaking to you, is He not? For it was God the Holy Ghost Who wrote that Word, and Who wrote it for you, as much as for any other of His people; He knew what *you* would want to be told, He knew what *you* would want to be warned against; and all this that Blessed Spirit then put down, and put down for your sakes. Then again, whenever your conscience says to you, This thing is very disagreeable, but still you ought to do it, and you must do it; or when your conscience says to you, Such another thing is very pleasant, looks very bright, seems to promise a great deal of happiness: but it is *sin;* and how can you do this great wickedness, and offend against God! That is God speaking to you, and it is very, very sad if you do not attend. Then again, when any one who is set over you speaks to you; when the Mother, for example, tells you to do this, or not to do that; still it is God speaking to you, and you are bound to hear.

But now about Samuel. God spoke to him, but not at all at the time when you might have

expected. Samuel was not saying his prayers; Samuel was not in any of the services of the temple; he was not doing any special good act; he was only *in bed*. And that may teach you that you never know how and where God may speak to you. Have you never had a good thought put into your minds, you could not tell why, you could not tell how? it just came in of its own accord? Very likely your guardian Angel put it there, but it was God's voice nevertheless: and you never can tell how or when it may come; the thing is always to be prepared to hear it.

Now see something else. God called, and Samuel heard; but Samuel did not know that it was God. He thought it was Eli. "He *ran* unto Eli, and said, Here am I, for thou calledst me." I wonder, by the bye, my children, how many of you, if you were woke out of your first sleep, as Samuel was then, would *run*, as he did, to the person that called you? It is just these little things that make true obedience; we are none of us likely to have any great things set us to do for Christ's sake; the great matter is, to do little things *at once*. This is the example which our dear Lord set us. As soon as ever God the Father sent Him to redeem the world, *then*, without any delay, *then* without any hesitation, *then*, that very moment, He said, "Lo I come, to do Thy will, O God." And depend upon it, when He went down and

lived in that poor cottage in Nazareth, and was subject to S. Mary and to S. Joseph, He did readily and willingly and at once whatever He was told to do. When He was sent on His Blessed Mother's errands, He went at once; when He was employed to fetch any of S. Joseph's tools, He went at once. My dear children, I do not want you to be like that son in the Parable who, when his father said to him, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard," said, "I will not; but afterward he repented and went." To be sure, it was a great deal better to do this than not to go at all; but how much best of all it would have been to have gone the very moment he was commanded!

Well, I said that Samuel did not know it was God that was calling him, and thought it was Eli. You say, I wonder how he could ever have made such a mistake! It must have been so easy to tell the difference. Did you ever, any of you, make the same mistake? Come, I will not say, *ever;* let us take the time since you came here, and that has now been four days. Have you all always got up the very first moment that the bell rang? Have you all always done exactly and at once what you were set to do in your lessons, or your work, or your play? "No," you say; "but then that is a very different thing. It was only the bell that called us; it was only the Mother, or Sister Martha who told us what to do: it was not as

if God were speaking to us." My dear children, indeed it *was* just exactly the very same thing. You thought it was the bell that rang, or the Mother that spoke, just as Samuel thought that it was Eli that spoke; but all the while it was God's voice to you; and when you disobeyed it, you disobeyed Him; and if you obey it you obey Him. So you must not wonder, you see, if Samuel made a mistake that you yourselves have made within only the last few days.

Now there is something else in Samuel that I praise very much. Here he was called up three times, in the middle of the night, and all, it seemed, to no purpose; and yet he went readily and cheerfully, and every time it was, "Here I am: for thou didst call me." Remember, all of you, it is not enough to do what you are set, unless you do it willingly. If you feel cross all the time you are doing it, if you take as little pains about it as possible, if you try to get it over as soon as you can, that is not the kind of obedience that God loves.

And now at last Eli found out the mistake. Eli perceived that God had called the child. And we can very often see when God is calling a child now, when God is putting something in her way which will prove whether she is really loving Him or not: that will show whether she really means to do His will, or her own: yes, and is giving her grace to obey Him,

is calling her nearer and nearer to Him, because some day He means to call her to live with Him for ever and ever. My dear children, as I get to know you all better, what a pleasure it will be to me to see that God is calling some of you in this way! What a great happiness to find out that you are trying to do something which is disagreeable, because you know that it is right, or to leave alone something that is very pleasant because you are sure that it is wrong!

Then Eli told Samuel what to do. He was to go and lie down once more: and if God called him again, he was to answer, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." And Samuel did so; only he left out one little word: and what was that? Eli had told him to say, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth:" but he did say, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." I suppose he could not believe that the God Who made heaven and earth would come down to speak to a child like himself; he did not think it possible that the voice, the still small voice which he heard in the quietness and darkness of that night, could be the same Voice which, as he had read, had given the Law upon Mount Sinai, when the people were so terrified at the sound, that they said to Moses, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." But what would Samuel have said if he had known what all of you know? That God not only speaks

to children, but that He became a Child Himself: first a little helpless Baby, as weak and helpless as any other baby, quite dependent on His dear Mother, nursed by her, fed by her, rocked to sleep by her; and then a Child, learning as other children, playing as other children, in all things doing as other children do, only without sin? Do you not think this would have astonished Samuel, much more than it did that GOD should have appeared to him in Shiloh? Much as he knew of God's love at that time, do you not think it would have seemed to him quite beyond all belief that the God of all things should become a Child in the cottage of a poor carpenter?

And see, when God had thus called Samuel, what He gave him to do. It was a very hard and very painful thing. He was to go to Eli, and give him a very sad and very fearful message. Because Eli had not kept back his sons from their great wickedness, therefore in one day they were both to die, and the High Priesthood was to be taken away out of that family. It says, "Samuel feared to show Eli the vision." I dare say he did. But still, he did as he was commanded, and he did it faithfully: he kept back nothing: "Samuel told him every whit; and hid nothing from him." And Eli received it like a good man as he was, notwithstanding his faults; he said: "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

And now, my dear children, what have I been telling you from this story? Let us see. That God very often speaks to all of you; and yet you do not know Who it is That is speaking: that you never can tell how or when He may say something to you which you are bound to obey: that when those who are set over you tell you to do anything, it is not so much they who speak, as it is God that speaks: and therefore, whatever you do at their bidding, you must, as the Apostle says, "do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men."

And if this be so, my dear Sisters, as it most assuredly is, what need of earnest prayer that commands, given with God's authority, should always be for God's glory, and for the setting forward the salvation of your dear children!

READING XXI.*

"And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda." Acts xii. 13.

Is it not very strange that while there are so many good people, yes, and so many saints, both in the Old and New Testaments, of whose names we are not told, this servant girl should have her name set down in the Acts of the Apostles, and known all over the Church? The poor widow, that cast in two mites, all she had, into the treasury, we do not know her name: Samson's mother, who showed such faith in God, we do not know her name: the son of the widow of Nain, whom our dear Lord raised to life, we neither know his name nor his mother's. But here, as plainly as possible, it is said: "A damsel came to hearken, named *Rhoda*."

Now, my dear children, would you not think it very strange that if one of you were to hear a knock at this door, and were to go out and answer it—would you not think it very strange that her going to open the door, and her name, should be set down by God the Holy Ghost in a Book written for all His Church; and that two thousand years hence it should be read

* Preached at the Orphanage, the Second Sunday after Easter, 1857.

about, and Priests should preach about it? Of course you would.

And so would Rhoda. She was just like one of you; I suppose rather older than most of you: but there is what she did, as well as her name; and set down too in one of the most interesting chapters in the Bible.

Now let us see what she was doing: for there is something in all this that you may well learn from; you especially, my dear children, in what GOD has told us about a girl like yourselves; brought up as you are in His fear; belonging to the same Church, only then very weak; and educated and brought up as a servant, as many of you will be some of these days.

And the first thing is,—how came she to be up so late? For, as we see from the whole history, it must have been past the middle of the night: a Sunday night, in all likelihood. And I will tell you why. It says, that Herod having thrown S. Peter into prison, determined after Easter to bring him forth to the people; it says also that this was the very night in which he was to be brought forth. Well; and it was a sad night in Jerusalem for the Christians. They had seen the Apostle S. James slain with the sword. Now they saw Peter taken, and were trembling lest he also was to be destroyed. It was the very last day, the very last night; it was "now or never," if God was to deliver him. Those Christians knew

the way to help him. They could not break open the bars, they could not bribe the guards; they could not even write to or see him: but help him they could and did. So they sent round to the principal of the Christians, and made an appointment to meet at the house of Mary the mother of John Mark (not the S. Mark whose Feast was yesterday), and then they resolved to go on praying till God would hear. It did not matter to them at all how: they could not guess in what way Peter was to be saved, but they knew that God could hear, and that was enough. So now you see why Rhoda was up so late. It was just as now, if we had any dear friend very ill, or in great trouble, and we all were going to pray earnestly for him or for her; I might say perhaps to the Mother, "Let so and so, as the case might be, Janet or Katie, or Annette, sit up; I am sure she will pray too."

So they fastened the shutters, and barred and bolted the doors, and began their prayer. And God fulfilled His own promise, "It shall come to pass, before they call upon Me, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Very well, then: I think we may conclude that Rhoda was a good girl, or she would not now have been joining in this earnest prayer.

But where was Peter all this while? And there we may see how God appoints different work for His servants. He was not praying,

like the rest of the Church in Jerusalem: he was asleep. And yet he was doing what he ought to have been doing, exactly as much as Mary the mother of Mark, and those in her house. And why? The next day he was to be brought forth to be put to death. He knew that he should stand in need of all his courage and power then; he knew that he should have to play the man for Christ's sake; and so, in Christ's Name, he laid himself down to sleep. No doubt he had been remembering how much his dear Master had suffered at the very same time ten years before; and I dare say he rejoiced in the thought that he was counted worthy to suffer for Him now.

However, I am not speaking to you of Peter, but of Rhoda. Only notice this; it says, "Peter was kept in prison: but"—and that is a very great *but*, indeed—"*but* prayer was made without ceasing of the Church to God for him." Herod might have his prison, and his keepers, and his bars; but God could send in one moment twelve legions of Angels and sweep them all away.

It was getting very late. That little company had been praying a long time; but they prayed on still. In the midst of their prayers, there was a knock at the door; and Rhoda went to hearken.

And why did she go to *hearken?* You must remember that it was in the time of persecution.

If they had opened the door at once, a party of Herod's soldiers might have rushed in, and carried them all off to prison. I have seen myself, in Holland, houses where God's servants used to meet when the Church was persecuted by heretics, with little sliding panels in odd, out-of-the-way corners, so that if any one knocked at the door, people might look out and see who it was, without its being known that any one was looking out.

I dare say that there was some such kind of contrivance here. At all events, Rhoda went to ask who was there, and to have an answer, too, before she opened the door. And what does this prove? Why, that Rhoda was *trustworthy*.

Now, my dear children, you can none of you have a higher character than that. If the Mother were to say to me of any of you, "I can trust her out of my sight as I can in," I would not wish anything better to be said of you. By the bye it will be everything to you in this world: ay, and in the next too, to deserve trust.

"Thou, God, seest me;" that is the great thought for you always: to work as dutifully when you are with God alone, to be as steady, to be as honest, to be as pure, as you would be if a thousand human eyes were looking at you. This is what you should try every day to be. Never mind being laughed

at, if that ever should happen, for doing your duty when no one would find fault with you if you left it undone. Think how God honours those that honour Him, and there is very little occasion to mind human ridicule.

Well, Rhoda went to hearken; and, listening through the door, and asking, "Who is there?" she heard Peter answer. Oh, how dearly she loved him! Very likely he had baptized her; very likely he had confirmed her; very likely he had given her her dear Lord's Body and Blood in her first Communion. "She opened not the gate for gladness:" and she was not the first person, by a great many thousands, that has shown her love in a foolish way. Because she loved Peter so dearly, she left him standing out in the darkness; in danger, for aught she knew, of being pursued and taken: liable to be known by any one who passed by. Instead of opening the door, "she ran in, and told how Peter stood at the gate."

And what did they say? "Thank God, He has heard our prayer!" or, "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy that it cannot hear." No! they had faith enough to pray, and to pray earnestly, but not faith enough to believe their prayer was heard. They said unto her, "Thou art mad." And now, dear children, she is an example to you. If ever you have to tell anything which you know to be true, and which other people

will not believe, remember what she did. She was not angry; she was not impatient; "she constantly affirmed that it was even so." When we know that we are speaking the truth, we are not to be afraid or ashamed if the whole world is against us and contradicts us. As the wise man says, "Fight thou for the truth unto death, and the LORD shall be on thy side." But neither are we to get angry and impatient. We must think that if GOD is the GOD of Truth, He is the GOD of Love also, and then we shall understand what S. Paul means by "speaking the truth in love."

"She constantly affirmed that it was even so." And how strange, that they should have gone on discussing the matter, while Peter continued knocking at the door, when by only opening it they might have been satisfied! Then said they, "It is his Angel." Not his guardian Angel: they did not mean that; there was no reason why such a one should have taken Peter's form, and spoken with Peter's voice. But they said, as we should now express it, "It is his ghost." They perhaps thought that while they had been praying, Herod had beheaded Peter in prison, as, some years before, he had beheaded John Baptist there at night; and that now Peter's spirit had come to tell them that they need not pray for his deliverance any longer.

Well, they say, *seeing is believing*. That is

not a Christian saying at all, for you know our dear Lord says, "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed." However, these good people, like S. Thomas, did not believe till they had seen. When they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. And so Rhoda's truth was proved; and so Rhoda's love to S. Peter was rewarded.

There, my children, you have heard what a girl like one of yourselves was doing some eighteen hundred years ago at Easter time. You have seen that she, too, was allowed to pray with the rest; you have seen that she was trustworthy, and you have seen how dearly she loved a great Saint like S. Peter. So I think she is an example to all of you, but in that one thing, her not opening the door for gladness. Think what that might have led to. Peter might, had not God's protection been over him, have been taken again, through Rhoda's thoughtlessness. It was what we should now call a want of presence of mind, that is, the power of doing at once in time of danger the very exact thing that ought to be done in it. Some day I will speak to you more about that: all well.

But, now: shall I see you all more and more trying to be like Rhoda, in her prayers, in her trustworthiness, in her love of that which is good? I trust and pray so.

And, my dear Sisters, you must remember that Rhoda's character had probably been formed in the house of Mary, the mother of Mark. And will not the characters of future Rhodas here depend, in the same degree, on you?

READING XXII.*

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." 1 S. JOHN iv. 17.

ABOUT a week ago, I was standing in a bookseller's shop, when some ladies came in, not the least knowing who I was, and asked for a copy of the stories I have told you. The shopman gave it to them, and they began turning over the pages. At last one said to the other, "Well, I wonder whether these children are better for having these sermons preached to them?" "No," said the other, "I don't think they are at all; I don't believe that children are any the better for being preached to." And that was all I heard.

Do you wonder, my children, that I should have thought a great deal about that little conversation? I have not preached very much to you, as you know. I generally like teaching you by catechising you better. But whatever sermons I may have preached to you, those in that book, or those not, remember this: If you are not all the better for them, you are all the worse. Every time you have come into the Oratory, or that you went into your old Oratory

* Preached the First Sunday after Trinity.

at that which used to be S. Katharine's, you never came out as you went in, but better or worse. That was an idle wonder in those people who thus spoke about you, but is it an idle wonder in me?—whether you will be better or worse for what is said to you?—whether you will be better or worse for what is done to you?—whether, when we all stand together before the Throne of God at the Day of Judgment, you will be happy, happy beyond all happiness, that you were children here, or whether you will curse the very day that you first saw S. Margaret's? This is a thought, indeed, for all of us; it is a thought which ought to be, and I hope is, very often in our minds.

You know where the text I just read you is to be found. It is in the Epistle for to-day. And what is to-day? The first Sunday after Trinity. We have now come to an end of all our great Feasts. We had Christmas, and our Lord was the poor little Baby in Bethlehem; we had the Epiphany, and He made Himself known to the Gentiles; we had Palm Sunday, and He rode on the ass into Jerusalem; Easter, and He rose from the sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea; Ascension Day, and a cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples; Whitsun Day, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, came down from heaven, according to His most true promise. Well, and by all these things what did we learn?

Surely His love. And what else? "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

And now that we are come to the end of them all, here we are told about this same love: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." What does that mean? I dare say, if ever you have thought the matter over: I dare say, if you had to answer at this moment, you would say that the day of judgment means that day which we generally call the Last Day, and that having boldness in the day of judgment means, not having reason to be terrified when we shall stand before the Throne of God then. But it does not mean that; no, nor has it anything to do with that.

Remember, S. John was writing,—not to those who, like ourselves, can serve God in peace and safety, none making us afraid; but to Christians who any day might be taken by the officer, cast into prison, scourged, beheaded, cast to wild beasts, for the Name of Christ. That is what the day of judgment means. It means the Day of Trial; the day when they should thus be brought before magistrates, then offered great rewards, perhaps great riches, if they denied Christ; and condemned to most cruel death, if they rejected them. Herein was their love made perfect, that they might have boldness then. They could give no greater

proof of their love, could they? Our Lord has said so Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Suppose those times were to come over again. Suppose that I were shut up in prison, and were to inquire what had become of you all. Suppose I were to know that in the Church a great image of an idol had been set up, and you were one by one taken in there, and commanded to fall down and worship it. Suppose that you were threatened, each of you, to be stripped of all your clothes, hung up before the mob, perhaps by ropes tied round your hands, perhaps even by hooks, such as you see meat hung up by at the butcher's, fastened under your shoulders, and, hanging so, to be scourged with whips, on which small pieces of lead were fastened, or burnt with torches, or tormented with red-hot iron pincers: do you think there is any of you, of whom, from what I know of her, I should believe that she could stand firm to the end, that she would have boldness in that Day of Judgment? Now, each of you ask yourselves, If I was so tried, do I think it is possible that I should remain firm? God knows it of you, and perhaps no one can beforehand answer for themselves. Then why do I ask you?

For this reason: it is not likely (mind, I do not say that I am sure it will not be so, for I

believe, as many holy men think, that times of great persecution are coming on the Church; but it is not likely) that you will then be tried as that verse of the Hymn says—

"For Thee all pangs they bare;
Fury and mortal hate,
The cruel scourge to tear,
The hook to lacerate."

But a day of trial you will all have; some sooner, some later; but all most certainly. And what kind of trial? Why, when you leave us, when you go out to your different places in the world, the world which hates God, the world which will not have our dear Lord to reign over it, it will try what it can do, by all in its power, to make you leave off His service. If you kneel down to your prayers night and morning, you will perhaps be laughed at; if you are afraid to do this or that which others do, because you know it to be a sin, you will be laughed at; you can hardly tell in how many different ways, and by how many different kinds of people, difficulties and trials will be put in the way, and the straight road which leads to everlasting life will be made still straighter for you. Well, then, remember the text,—"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment;" and remember what S. Paul says: "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn

asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword:" where he puts "cruel mockings" first, as if they were the hardest of all things to be borne.

But now what does this mean, "Because as He is, so are we in this world?" If it were, "Because as He was," I could understand it easily. We bear the same things, only not half so heavily, as He Who is our Lord and our God bore for our sakes. But how "as He *is?*" how, when we are suffering, and because we are suffering, are we like Him Who has done with suffering for ever; Who dwells in the Land "where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;" Who is the Lord of that Land? How so?

And I think it means this; that in all we do, He feels for us, if we are His true children; all we bear, He bears with us, if we are His true servants. I have told you why it is written in the Book of Acts, that S. Stephen, when He was being stoned, "looking up stedfastly into Heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus *standing* on the Right Hand of God:" because, while His dear servant was in agony, the Lord would not be sitting at ease.

And just the same here. My children, ought it not to be a comfort to think that He does thus feel for you? that, so far as He can suffer pain, when you are in grief, He is in grief also;

when you have a hard duty to do, He has a hard thing to do in you and by you; when you have won any victory, He has won it for you and in you?

It ought to be, indeed! And He has not forgotten how He was once a Child Himself; He has not forgotten how those Hands,—those Hands which He now stretches forth for us to the Father, the very same Hands, only now with the marks of the nails in them,—once held the tools in the shop of S. Joseph, when He was learning and practising the like obedience; once held the tow wound round them for His Blessed Mother, as she was spinning it off. "In that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted;" in that He Himself has laboured, He knows how to pity, to help, to feel for, those that must labour.

"Herein is our love made perfect:" not all at once: but a little bit every day. Every week, my children, you ought to be able to do something which last week you could not do; much more every month, much more still every year. I say so to you: I say so to the Sisters; I say so, most of all, to myself. It is a life of trying for us all, a life in which we must try, and must help each other to try, every day and every hour.

And God help you, my children, and help us all, so that in the Great Day of Judgment, when

every man's work shall be tried what it is, we may go to live with that dear Lord, Whom here we can only love and think of, and see with the eye of faith.

READING XXIII.*

"Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley and the rye, in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread-corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen." Isa. xxviii. 24-28.

I SHOULD not wonder if you had never noticed these verses before; and now that I have read them to you, you perhaps think that they are very difficult to understand, and that they are not at all interesting. We shall see presently: but in the first place notice something else. You know how often it pleased our dear Lord to teach the people by country sights and country business: how He told them to consider the lilies; how He spoke of the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how He told the Parable of the Sower, of the Tares, of the Seed that was cast into the ground, and sprung and grew up, men knew

* Preached to the children of the Orphanage, the Third Sunday after Trinity, July 10, 1859.

not how: of the fields that were white already to harvest. And what the Lord did, His disciples learnt from Him to do, as you may see in the Epistles. And here, in the Old Testament, we have an example of the same thing. You remember what S. Mark says: "After this He appeared in another shape unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country." And so, in your country walks there are plenty of things which He is ready to teach you, if you will only learn. The crops, the flowers, the rocks, they each have their lesson; they are each a kind of standing parable, if He will only give you eyes to see what its meaning is.

And therefore I think that you ought to be very thankful for this among other things: that you do live in the country and not in the town. Some of you know very well what it is to live in the town, and never to see trees and flowers; never to hear the birds, never to see the clear blue sky. This, too, is an advantage, a talent for which you will have some day to give account.

Now what is Isaiah speaking of in these verses? He is telling us of the different ways in which different crops are cultivated; how they are sown at first, how they are brought to the mill at last. And more particularly he tells you of fitches, and cummin, and wheat.

What are fitches? We generally call them vetches; I dare say some of you know the bright little boat-shaped flower of that name.

Here in Sussex we do not cultivate them much: but in many parts of England they do, and so they did in Judæa, as food for cattle. Cummin is a plant that is sown on account of its little spicy seed. You know what carraway seeds are, which they put in sugar-plums: cummin-seeds are not unlike them. A very little seed: insomuch that you may remember when our Lord was finding fault with the Pharisees for neglecting great things, while they pretended to be so very careful about little matters, He tells them that they tithe mint and anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the Law.

It begins: "Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin?" That is, does he plough and tear up the earth for the sake of ploughing and tearing it, and, as it were, putting it to pain? No: he doth it for a particular reason; that it may be fit to have different plants set in it: and when it has been prepared for that, then he leaves it alone: then the plough is drawn away to the little green strip at the end of the field, or to the shed in the farm-yard, and there it lies by till the next year. Now what does S. Paul tell us? "Ye are God's husbandry: ye are God's building." Just what an earthly husbandman does to the ground, God, Who is the Heavenly Husbandman, does to us.

Our hearts are so cold and hard and careless, that they have to be ploughed up, as it were, by sorrow; or they never would be fit to bear any fruit. David says, "Before I was troubled I went wrong; but now have I kept Thy word;" and there is nothing at all through the Bible we read oftener than this. You, my children, have this ploughing as well as every one: you have not the same sorrow, the same affliction, the same grief that grown-up people have; but you have your own little sorrows, which are not little to you. To the holy angels, I dare say, all our cares and griefs seem alike little; but they care for all, and try to help us through all.

Well; but these same verses tell us that God does not try the weak so much as He does the strong. "The fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod." If we were to put such poor little things as fitches and cummin into the same mill in which we grind corn, we should utterly destroy them. So they are treated in a much gentler way. In order that the fruit may be separated from the husk, they are also beaten, but it is with a staff or rod,—not ground between two heavy stones. "But," he goes on, "bread-corn is bruised." Wheat has a much harder trial to go through: but then when it

has gone through it, how much more valuable it is! Poor little weak things are much less tried, but then they are less worth; the most valuable of all seeds, wheat, is bruised most severely, and thence comes bread, the staff of life.

Now see what Isaiah says in another place: "In measure, when it shooteth forth, Thou wilt debate with it: He stayeth the rough wind in the day of the east wind." That is, in early spring, when the young leaves begin to shoot forth, God debates with them, that is, tries them, in measure as they are able to bear: if He allows the east wind, which is the worst and most dangerous wind, then He does not allow it to blow hard; if He sends a rough wind, then it is not an east wind.

And this is the way that God deals with you. While you are young and tender, He shelters you from great temptation, He keeps you safe in the fold here. By and by, your temptations will become greater; but then you will have more strength. You will first have been Confirmed, which is the very sacrament of strength, and then you will receive that which one of the Prophets calls "the Corn of the Mighty," namely, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Strength Himself. This is trying you by measure: giving you strength, before He calls you to use it. If you are poor little fitches, then you need not be afraid that you

will be ground in a mill, like stronger things. The Scotch have a pretty little proverb, though it requires to be explained, to the same effect. They say, "The worst blast of the three borrowing days never hurts the one poor little hogget." "The borrowing days" are the three last days of March, which March borrows, as they say, from April: and the lambs of that spring just born, they call *hoggets*. The month of March is the time of the fiercest winds, when the sleet drives most blindingly over the mountains, and on the moors, where the sheep pasture; the proverb therefore means that the very worst of all storms is not allowed to hurt the very weakest of all creatures. You know what a helpless creature a very young lamb is: how it seems hardly able to stand on its tall trembling legs, how it looks too heavy for itself: but you do not know what a mountain storm is in Scotland. Well, then, if you are in our fold, I am sure that the worst blast of temptation will not really be allowed to hurt *our* poor little *hoggets*.

Then you must remember that, though we have no right to wish for temptations, because we know and feel how weak we are, much less to run into them, when our Lord has taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation:" yet, when He does send them, we ought not to be frightened, we ought not to be sorry, we ought rather to rejoice. If He allows them to come,

it is in order that we may be able to do Him the more honour by means of them. S. James says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life." It is not only that the more we are tried here, the brighter Crown we shall have by and by; but the more we are tried here, the happier, even here, we shall be, because we shall learn more of God's strength, and of God's love and care for us, and how many wonderful ways He has of delivering us, which we should never have thought of.

You know that among the Martyrs of Christ, S. Ignatius was one of the most famous. In writing one of the Epistles just before his death, he says, "I am the corn of Christ: I know that I must be ground by the teeth of the lions as in a mill, that I may be presented like fine flour to my Lord." Could there be a more terrible grinding than that? And yet, do you think that S. Ignatius would now, for any joy set before him, not have suffered it?

Now look through the text once more, and you will find five kinds of threshing mentioned: by the staff; by the rod; by the treading out under the feet of oxen or horses; by the threshing instrument, which was also called a drag, a kind of harrow made with bushes and weighted with stones; and the waggon, which not only threshed out the corn, but cut up the straw as fodder for the cattle; for the Jews never used

hay. All this means to show us how many ways God has of trying us; from the staff and rod, down to the dreadful way in which bread-corn was bruised. Our dear Lord was tried by all; one after another; all from the time that He came into this world in the cold winter, and in the poor manger, to the time that he went out of it on Mount Calvary.

Now, my children, neither I nor any one can say what God has in store for you: but this I know, that if, as you grow up, you grow up His true servants, some trials you will have: "If ye be without chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons." You do not know much about temptations yet; but you must try to keep in your mind that come they must, come they will, so that you may not be taken unawares. If you ever mean to conquer great ones, you must be in the habit of conquering the little ones you have here. Little temptations: not to speak the exact truth; to be unkind to your companions; to be passionate; to be envious, if you see one of your playmates do something or get something which you cannot do, and have not had given, yourself. Above all things, be obedient. Before they send soldiers to fight with the enemy, what do they do to them? They send them out to encamp on commons and hills here at home. They get used to cold and wet and storm and wind; they learn how to manage for themselves in time of peace;

and then all these things will not be new to them in time of war. So they have reviews, that is, pretence battles: they are taught how to meet soldiers pretending to be the enemy, that when they come to face a real enemy, they may feel that it is not altogether a strange thing. What is said of our Lord? He went forth conquering and to conquer. And so must you. If you are not conquering, as you go on, now; you cannot hope that you will go out to conquer by and by.

Try to think of these things, my children: try to pray over them. And then, when the great fierce temptation really comes, you will be able to say, This I knew that I must expect; then I must not be afraid of it: "forewarned, forearmed."

And then, when the wheat has grown up from the earth and has been cut down, and threshed, and separated from the chaff; then the King will say to the reapers, that is, the Angels, "Gather the wheat into My barn." My children, God grant that you may be all some day safely gathered in there!

READING XXIV.*

"Fret not thyself, else shalt thou be tempted to do evil."
PSALM xxxvii. 8.

WHAT does the word to *fret* mean? Why, it means to rub and rub something, till, by degrees, its outside surface becomes worn away. You read in the Psalms about a moth fretting a garment. I have seen a machine, in which a thread of silk had continually to run round a cylinder of glass, a thousand times or more in a minute; and this for ten hours a day. At the end of some years you could just see a channel which this thread had worn in the glass, a tiny line. Think, then, how very, very, small each of the grains must have been that the thread ground out, when it took so many years, with such hard rubbing every day, to make a line which should be seen at all.

Well; here we read of another kind of fretting or wearing away, the fretting or wearing away ourselves. And the person who gives way to that we call, as you know, a fretful person. A very common sin it is, one of the commonest that I know, especially among children; and here we have a Psalm, as we also have a chapter in the Book of Proverbs, to warn us against it. Now, what do we mean by fretting? It is not

* Preached the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, Aug. 7, 1859.

the same thing as anger; it is not the same as discontent; it is not at all the same as hatred; it is not the same as impatience; but it has something to do with all of these. It is the being always apt to make a little murmuring against the state of life, or the circumstances for the time being, that God places us in. There is nothing great in it; a man may be in a great passion, or indulge great hatred, but we hardly talk about fretting greatly. No; it is a little wearing complaint; always at it, never leaving off; perpetually rubbing, as the silk did the glass. We have several instances of it in the Bible. Jonah was fretful about the gourd, that came up in a night and perished in a night. Jacob was fretful when he said, "All these things are against me." The children in the market-place were fretful, when, as our Lord tells, if piped to, they would not dance, and if mourned to, they would not lament.

Now this is a sin which people will give way to all their lives, and hardly seem to consider a real sin at all. You all know how disagreeable a fretful person or a fretful child is. It does not matter that it is a little discontent, a little murmuring, a little complaining; it is the continual dropping that wears away the stone, not the bigness of this or that drop.

And now see. A fretful person does not dare to say outright what he feels. If he did, it would be this: "God is dealing very hardly

and unjustly with me. He always does deal very hardly and unjustly with me. I should be so glad to get such and such a thing, which so and so has, and it is never given to me, though it is to them plentifully. Or, I should be so thankful to get rid of this or that pain, but I am sure to have it." A good example of a fretful speech is that of the elder brother of the Prodigal Son: "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf."

And see why this is such a sin. In the first place, because it is telling God not only that He does visit us after our iniquities, but that He is continually sending on us much more than we deserve. So no one that is humble can ever be fretful. Ah! if we only would think what that means which Jeremiah says, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not"—what? that we are not punished? that we are not cast out as unprofitable servants? that we are not beaten with many stripes? much more than all this: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." With so much that is done for us, and such a return that we make; with so much help, and yet we are not helped; with so much encouragement, and yet we will not

be encouraged! Therefore fretfulness can only come from pride. And that is not all: there is a kind of deceit in it, too. We do not dare to say openly, "God is dealing unjustly and cruelly with me:" so instead of complaining of Him, we complain of those about us. But He sees that it is but a deceitful and lying way of showing our ill-temper to Him, by professing to feel it with some one else. What did Jacob say when he was angry and annoyed about the loss of his children? "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away." *Ye* will! It was not his sons' doings: it was God's ordering: and it was God with Whom, in very deed, Jacob was angry. See how Moses spoke about this, when the children of Israel were speaking against Aaron and himself: "What are we that ye murmur against us? your murmurings are not against us, but against God." And so it is over and over again now. You are fretful among your companions, you say peevish discontented things to them; and you in real truth are speaking against God. You try to hide it from them: you even try to hide it from yourselves: but from God you cannot hide it. Remember that text: "The eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, beholding all the ways of men." Your poor miserable peevish complainings are against Him, not the less because you will not own it; nay, the sin is all the greater, because,

besides murmuring against Him, you are trying to deceive Him too.

And see how remarkably the text goes on: "Fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil." And that shows us how Satan is always ready, always waiting, always on the watch, to see when we may best be tempted, and to tempt us at that particular moment. There is good need that God's Priests should say to you, what the watchman in Israel cried to them that inquired of him. It is a very singular text; therefore attend to it: there is no text which teaches more: "For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth. And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels: and he hearkened diligently with much heed:" and he cried—what do you suppose? One should imagine perhaps that he cried of what he had seen: but, no: "and he cried, *A lion*;" and then he went on to tell what he had seen. Why did he cry *a lion* first? We hear nothing about a lion in the text before. Because whatever happens to us, or whatever we have to do, we are always close to that lion who "walketh about seeking whom he may devour," even Satan: and therefore of him the watchman gave warning, in the first place. Notice what we read in the Proverbs: "The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way: I shall be slain in the streets." Now he

is not slothful or to blame for the first part of what he said. A lion is in the way: that is true enough. A lion is in all our ways, as long as we are in this world; and that is why Isaiah, writing of heaven, says, "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there." But he is slothful for saying, "I shall be slain in the streets," instead of believing that God is able to deliver us, if we trust in Him, from the teeth of this spiritual lion, as he delivered David from the "paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear."

Well, then, at all times Satan is ready to attack us: but sometimes we almost invite him to assault us. Sometimes we put ourselves into such a condition that, if he does attack us, we shall hardly be able to resist him. You know when any infectious disease is about, like the cholera, or the typhus fever, we are all exposed to the danger of it. But there are certain things which if we do,—there is certain food which if we eat,—we shall be far more likely to take it. And therefore the physicians put forth notices what people ought not to do, ought not to eat, if they are to avoid the disease. Just so it is with our souls; and so here, God, Who is the Great Physician, tells us what we are not to do, if we wish to be preserved from the attack of Satan: "Fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil." Now one of the first stories

in the Bible shows us how one who has thus been fretting himself, is just in the way to fall into the most frightful temptations. And what story do I mean? Why that of Cain and Abel. Cain fretted himself, even in God's very presence, because Abel's offering was accepted, and his was not; and we know what the end of this story was. And the children of Israel fretted themselves that the land of Canaan was too strong ever to be conquered by them; that the giants and walled cities and the seven nations would keep them for ever out of the country that flows with milk and honey. What sentence did they provoke God to pronounce upon them at last? Listen; and then see what their fretting ended in: "Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their forefathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it."

And see now, "Fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil." We begin the sin for ourselves; Satan works it out to the full. Just as it is in the opposite way. We try after some good thing, we do our best, we set ourselves to the work, and then our dear Lord works with us and helps us. Thus in an evil thing; we begin it, often, for ourselves, and Satan takes it out of our hands and finishes it for us. Yes, indeed, and we should over and over again be apt to cry out, as Hazael did, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

if we could see the evil into which, starting from some very little sin, or what seems to us very little, we should be led.

And now notice one thing more. What kind of fretting is that which David here speaks of? Why, when there is really cause for us to be moved, then it really is a heavy trial. When we see the wicked seeming to prosper, and we ourselves, though we may be trying to serve God, vexed and persecuted and afflicted, even then "fret not thyself." Nevertheless, this was so hard a trial to Asaph, him that wrote so many of the Psalms, that he says, "Then thought I to understand these things, but it was too hard for me, yea, and I had almost said even as they," that is, as the wicked, "but, lo: then should I have condemned the generation of Thy children." Now, my children, you do not know as yet what this means, but probably you will know it some day; and then you will find it a very hard trouble to bear; a trouble that you only can bear, by looking as S. Paul says, "Not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;" by looking past the present to the future; by casting your eyes past the *middle* to the *end*. And this is the verse that, above all others, I would then have you remember: "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well

with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

I took this text because it came in the Psalm which you have just been saying, not for any other reason. But remember this, health has some especial temptations, and sickness some: and one of those of sickness is to be fretful. Any of you who do not feel strong, who are used to pain, who are accustomed to feel ill, must be all the more on your guard against this; against feeling discontented and peevish, and fretful about little things. And remember that country in which there can be no ill-temper; remember Him Who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds," "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself unto Him that judgeth righteously." That is the country of which the inhabitants will no more say, "I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquities."

READING XXV.*

"Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." Ps. xci. 13.

EVERY day we are saying the Psalms and the Antiphons that belong to your own Saint, S. Margaret. So it is but fair that, as in the service, so should be the sermon; and that is why I took this text. You know how it is said, whether truly, or by way of parable, that this Saint, who lived in Pisidia (the same of which we read in the Acts), conquered a terrible dragon that ravaged that whole country. It might really be so; or the story may only mean, that in a land which lay in darkness and the shadow of death, she fought the good fight of faith against that old serpent, as S. John speaks, called the Devil and Satan, that deceiveth the world. And this she did indeed; and so at last went home by a glorious Martyrdom.

Now this text has to do with all of you, my children, as much as with S. Margaret. "Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder:" you know who is that roaring lion that goeth about seeking whom he may devour; and whom, as S. Peter says, we are to resist, stedfast in the faith. You know who is that poisonous serpent, who

* Preached in the Octave of the Feast of S. Margaret.

first deceived Eve, so that she ate of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, and who tries to deceive us all every day of our lives, still. So see what the Psalm promises you; that you shall have strength to conquer temptation, when it comes like a great fierce roaring lion, and not less when it comes like a crafty, creeping, wily, poisonous serpent.

Now what kind of temptations come upon us like a lion? Why, all such as would stir us up to disobedience, or to anger, or hatred; all such as seem to assault us first of all from without. Some one is unkind, or we think so; some one speaks harshly, or we think so; and then, instead of remembering by whose Name we are called, by the Name of Him "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not;" of Him Who when He was accused of many things, answered never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly—we work ourselves up into a passion, call hard names, try to hurt those that have hurt us, sometimes are quite carried away by the violence of our passion; so that we scarcely know what we are doing any more than if we were really and truly mad. That is the temptation coming upon us like a lion. And I will tell you another way in which it comes like a lion; when we have done something wrong, or have had some unfortunate accident, and a great terrible fear falls upon us.

and so we are tempted to deny it: and so we tell one lie to begin with, and almost always two or three more to prevent that first lie from being found out. This temptation, too, comes upon us like a lion, and, if we are not very, very careful, may carry us off at once. "Thou shalt go upon the lion," is the promise; that is, Thou shalt be able to conquer such fierce strong temptations that leap down on you all of a sudden, and come upon you from without.

Then what is meant by "the adder?" Why, those temptations which creep quietly into our hearts, one can hardly tell how, and are only known to ourselves, and go on poisoning, poisoning, till at last, unless God's great mercy save us, they destroy us just as surely as those other lion-like attacks of Satan. What kind do I mean? Why, such thoughts as those of pride and conceit that lie deep down in our minds, which we should be very much afraid to tell to any one, but which we ourselves take great pleasure in. As any one of you, my children, might be tempted to think that she was cleverer, or prettier, or a greater favourite than others; and instead, if it be so indeed, of asking, as S. Paul does, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" should be apt to fancy that it is her own powers or goodness which have got these things for her. That is a very poisonous adder. But I will tell you of one still more poisonous; and that is, when we

allow impure thoughts, not only to come into our minds, but to stay there, and instead of hunting them out at once, take pleasure in them. Remember this, any wicked thought may come into the mind of any servant of God, even of a Saint: that he cannot help. Evil spirits have the power of whispering them to us, and we can no more help *that* than we can help hearing a wicked word, or an oath, as we go by in the streets. So that never should make any one unhappy. The sin does not begin till we allow it to remain there, encourage it to stop, ask it to come again. And, my children, any of you who so fall into temptation are in great danger indeed. Yes, Satan is very dangerous when he comes as a lion; but much more dangerous when he comes as an adder. For the outward show of passion and anger, people generally get over as they grow up. I have seen a child, in a fit of passion, throw itself on the floor and bite the carpet with its teeth; but no man or woman would do so except a savage. The anger is, very likely, just as deep down in their hearts. Nay, perhaps they may feel more malice and hatred, but they get a certain sort of mastery over their outward actions, because they know that they would not be thought fit to live in the society of men if they did not. But the adder-temptations of Satan, to pride, vanity, selfishness, impurity; these are just as bad in grown-up

persons as in children; and often very much worse.

The first part of the verse was, "Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder:" then why does it go on, "the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet?" For this reason: all temptations are not equally strong. And so you might say, my children, God's grace can help me through little temptations: but how, when I go out into the world, and meet with great ones? Why, it will be just the same thing then. "The lion and the adder:" these are bad enough, but they are not so bad as "the young lion"—that is, the lion in the chiefest of his strength—"and the dragon." A lion can leap on you and tear you in pieces, but he cannot poison; an adder can poison, but he cannot tear and rend: but a dragon can tear, and rend, and poison all at once: and, besides, has wings to enable him to fly, and a tail with a cruel sting. So he is put last, as the worst of all. But however bad, however terrible Satan's temptations are, God's power is far greater; and therefore it says, "The young lion and the dragon shalt thou"—not only conquer, but—"tread under thy feet."

Yes: it is very true: you will all have to meet temptations. Every one must have some; but we are bound to keep out of their way as much as we can. And one great thing is, to know what is the greatest temptation to us; for

all people, all children even, are not led away by the same thing. Among you, my children, this is just the case. I can tell you what are some of your principal temptations, and I know which of you are most subject to which; and so do you in your hearts. One or two of you are apt to be tempted by being too fond of nice things to eat; and that is a child's very common temptation. One or two of you are so horribly afraid of being laughed at, that I can only pray, whenever the time comes that you must go out to service, that God may very, very much increase your courage, or else not allow you to be placed where you would be subject to be ridiculed for the sake of trying to serve Him. Else I am afraid you would be laughed out of saying your prayers, out of reading your Bible, out of going to Church; and, unless God's great mercy help you, laughed out of your soul! One or two of you have quite a different kind of temptation; and you ought to try against it all the more, because those who are altogether selfish and careless about others could not have it at all. And it is this: to fancy yourselves slighted and neglected, and not cared for, because, very often without any intention, and quite by accident, one of your playmates has been noticed in a way that you have not been. I have sometimes, when we have all been walking out together, seen a bright face almost suddenly clouded over; and

I have been able to read the reason in the heart, as easily as if it were printed in a book. Yes; and I have known some who gave way to this, when they were children, never able to conquer it afterwards; no, on the contrary, it grew more and more on them, till they became miserably jealous and discontented in old age. It is never a great sin at first; nevertheless it is a poisonous little adder, and will grow more and more poisonous, till it gets to something downright like envy at last.

And so much about your temptations. Now I will tell you of something which may show us what care we ought to take never wilfully to put ourselves in the way of yielding to them. A few days ago I was at Dartford, in Kent, where there are great gunpowder mills. Here they make vast quantities of gunpowder, and store it up in barrels. But the making it is very dangerous, because if the least spark were to get among the materials, the whole building and every house near it, would be blown to pieces. When you go to see it, you first find a bare piece of ground all round the building itself: no shrubs or trees: to prevent any possibility of their being set on fire in a dry summer. Then you knock at a very strong gate, and enter a long stone passage, side and roof stone also. Then you are examined to see if you have any matches or steel, that might strike fire; your shoes are taken off, lest the nails in them should

strike light; your coat, if it has steel buttons, is taken off; and so you are led through the great cold halls where these men sit grinding nitre, and saltpetre, and charcoal together. Do what they can, it is very dangerous work, and the men are paid very high. I remember once, while sitting at home in a house about twelve miles from these mills, hearing the windows violently shaken, and feeling the whole house tremble. The mills had blown up, and every soul in them perished.

Well, then, if so much care is taken, and most rightly, that no accident should happen here, how careful ought we to be, seeing there is so much gunpowder of corruption in our minds, not to let any spark of temptation, if we can help it, be set to it! My children, think of this when next time you say, "And lead us not into temptation."

And now, &c.

READING XXVI.*

"Be sure your sin will find you out." NUMB. xxxii. 23.

IT struck me much the other day, my children, that there has been no death among you since I first had to do with you. With such numbers, and so long a time having passed, that was not to be expected. You know that there are persons whose business it is to draw up lists of all those who die every week in London, and in all the great towns of England; and so we have a way of judging how many it is likely, in such a time, God will call to stand before Himself. Now, had any one judged before hand, when you first came to East Grinsted, how many of you it was probable God would have taken by this time, those who are learned in such matters would say, "Probably two."

Now, if God has spared you more than His general dealings would have led us to expect, why do you think he has done it? Was it that you are so much better than other children? Was it that He has seen so much that He could love in you beyond other children? Was it that you, beyond others, take so much pains to please Him, take such pains to avoid any-

* Preached to the children of S. Margaret's Orphanage, the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity, August 19, 1860.

thing that would offend Him? I leave your own consciences to answer that.

Now, my children, you know how much oftener I speak to you of the Love of God than of his Justice: how often I tell you; only deny yourselves here; only tread in the footsteps of your dear Lord; only try what you can do to be like him; and then in time he will take you to that happy country, to those gardens where there is everlasting spring, to those streets which are made of gold, to that land where there is no night.

You know how seldom I've threatened you; how seldom I have said; If you do thus and thus, if you leave alone doing that and that, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; you will have your companionship, not with bright Angels, but with horrible devils; not in the glorious light that comes from the Throne of God, but in the thick darkness that is in the dominion of Satan. No; you know how I have tried to persuade you, rather than to frighten you.

But what, when I see that I cannot persuade you? What, that when I see that you are serving best, singing best, to all outward appearance getting on best; in real truth, deep down in your hearts you are not right with God? What am I to do then? Am I to speak to those that are over you, and so take care that you should be punished? But, unless that

could touch your hearts, what benefit would that be?

Now listen to me, my children: and especially the elder ones. It has grieved me beyond measure to know how you are in the habit of yielding to one especial sin, in thought and word, with regard to those who are set over you. Your own consciences tell you well enough what I mean. Your guardian Angels, who are standing by you know what I mean. Ay: and those evil spirits who are also standing by you to tempt you to sin, know what I mean too.

Yes: it does grieve me deeply. *Now* I can see why it is that if God's good spirit touches the heart of any one of you, and leads her to wish to Confess, the rest of you do your best to ridicule her out of the practice. You well may. "He that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deed should be reproved."

You know how dearly I love you all: how I rejoice to hear of your getting on well now with us; how I look forward to your winning for yourselves good characters, and gaining glory for God, when you go out to service by and by. But can I think so, when I know how you are in the habit of talking of and ridiculing those above you; those who work day and night for you; those who would lay down their lives for you? When I think of this, I feel that if you were heathen children I should call it sadly

wicked, sadly mean. And when I further remember not only that you have been baptized, not only that you cannot commit any sin without fighting against the Holy Ghost; but how much knowledge many of you have of the Bible; how many of you have been confirmed, and, from time to time, receive our dear Lord's very Body and very Blood: what can I think of your hopes in this world, or the next?

"Be sure your sin will find you out." To a certain extent it has found you out now. You had no idea that I knew how you have thus sinned: how you have spoken most undutifully of those who have been most loving to you: and how there has been no one—yes, no one—to turn round on God's side, and say, "You may thus talk as you will: I have no lot or part in the matter."

But my knowing—what does that matter? "Be sure your sin will find you out" still. My children, when I have spoken to you as if you were really trying to serve God, really trying to deny yourselves, really trying to be true children of the Child Jesus: must you not have felt like hypocrites, knowing that you were giving way to sins which proved you to be no such thing? And suppose it had pleased God to take any one of you suddenly, who had been in the habit of thus sinning, and I then for the first time had learnt, as I was standing by the coffin of one whom I believed to be my own dear child, God's own dear child,

whom I hoped to see again some day, if by God's goodness I shall ever be counted worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven myself; what if it should then have been said to me: she, while she lived, was guilty of such an offence; you never knew it, her companions did; they encouraged her in it, she has now appeared before the throne of God: for her there is no more space of repentance! We cannot limit God's infinite mercy: but can you hope with any assurance that she was a true child of Christ?

Dear children, it grieves me to the heart to speak to you as I am now speaking: now, while the future is open to you: now, while you may all be saved if you will. But how should I have felt, if for the first time I had heard of this sin, when for one of you it was too late to be repented of? What bitter, hopeless grief should I have gathered then from that terrible text, "Be sure your sin will find you out!"

Well, I have seen proofs of God's grace in the hearts of several of you. Are all to be lost? or is this miserable fault to hang about you, making every prayer you say a profanation, every verse you say an insult to God? I trust, I trust, not. But there can be no true repentance without confessing the sin. I do not mean to me. You know *whom* you have injured; you know how you have injured that person; you know how it has not been once or

twice. *I* shall never accuse you. But I want you, bravely, courageously, I want you like Christian children, to accuse yourselves. I want you to go to that person, and to say what Achan did, "Indeed, I have sinned, and thus and thus have I done." Ashamed! I dare say: but it would be a false shame: a shame you ought to tread under foot. Ashamed! it is a shame which would bring you glory in God's eyes: and (if you care for that) honour in mine. Ashamed! Then I should call you truly brave; then I should once more think you, what *till* then I never can or will think you, my own dear children; then I should once more take pleasure in, what till then I never can take pleasure in, your singing. When you are trying to be God's true children, you know how I enjoy that singing; how, to use the word in a good sense, how proud I am of it. But what can I be, while it is outside, heartless work; and there is no real truth or earnestness in it?

Now, my children, for our Lord's sake, Whom you never can be like, while you thus give way to habitual sin; for your own sake, as your value your souls; and last and least, for my sake, who do pray earnestly for you, and would give or suffer anything to be able to help you, put away this evil from among you. Pray against it, try against it, resolve against it, and pray, try, and resolve, so that you may acknowledge it as I have told you.

Now; you shall not sing again this afternoon. I had rather that you all tried to collect your thoughts, and to say, For Thy Name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.

And now, &c.

READING XXVII.*

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger." S. Luke xvii. 17, 18.

There is to this day a hill in the land of Palestine, where about our Easter time you may see the Passover lamb killed, the elders of the people taking a part in the worship, teaching the children the reason why this Feast was held, and blessing God, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And who are these? These are the Samaritans, of whom you read so often in the New Testament: and that hill, Mount Gerizim, is that of which the woman of Samaria spake to our Lord; "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." It is the oldest religion that has been kept up, as it was at the beginning, in this world. For the Jews, you know, have no temple, no priest, no sacrifice, they are wanderers and vagabonds over the face of the earth. But these poor Samaritans (there are not more than four or five thousand of them now) worship just as their fathers worshipped two thousand five hundred years ago. They have the oldest copy of the books of Moses that there is: and

* Preached the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1859.

these books of Moses form all their Bible; they will have nothing to say to any other part of the Old Testament: and, of course, they utterly reject the New Testament, and will not believe in Him Who called Himself the good Samaritan, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Poor, obstinate people! Yet I cannot help admiring the love and faith, such as it is, that has always kept them to the same mountain, and the same form of worship; notwithstanding all the contempt and ridicule which has been heaped upon them; yes, and notwithstanding all the persecution they have endured, for at times they have been cruelly persecuted; and I cannot but hope that for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, though they know Him not, some of them, at least, will one day be taken from Mount Gerizim, where they still worship the God of their fathers, to Mount Sion, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

But now, my children, the question for you is, whether you too are not like the leprous Jews in the text, amongst whom was one of these poor Samaritans. First, think what the leprosy was. All the body came out full of white, smooth, shining boils, more like a chilblain than anything else; and when the disease was at its worst, these boils ate away the flesh, making large hollows, till at last the flesh consumed away off the bones. I do not think this was often the case among the Jews; but

this was a common disease in Europe some four or five hundred years ago; and one of the petitions in the Litanies of that time used to be, "On all poor lepers, good Lord, have mercy!" For they were driven from among men; had to live in places by themselves; were forced to receive our Lord's Body and Blood through little windows in the outside of the Churches; if ever you go over to West Hoathly, you may see one there. And, as you know, in Leviticus we have a great number of laws about the Jewish leprosy; how they were to live apart from all men; made any one who touched them, or whom they touched, unclean; had to shave the head and cover the upper lip, and to cry, "Unclean, unclean." I do not mean to say that this disease always had to do with sin, but it very often had; as you may remember how Gehazi, for the lie that he told, was covered with the leprosy of Naaman; and how king Uzziah, when he went into the holy place to offer incense, which only priests might do, had the leprosy rise up in his forehead; and how Miriam, because she rebelled against Moses, whom God had set over the children of Israel, in like manner was smitten with leprosy.

Well, then, you see how horrible and loathsome a disease it was from which these ten men were delivered; and they knew it to be so themselves, for even when they were crying

out for mercy, they stood afar off. And yet nine out of the ten, although they were so healed, did not think it worth while, did not take the trouble, to come back and thank our Lord for what He had done.

Now I said that there was great danger lest you, my children, should be like these men; and that though you have been set free from a worse disease than ever the leprosy was, you should not show your thankfulness for having been healed. Now see. You know that the Gospel and Epistle of the day almost always go together, so that one explains the other. So it is here. In the Gospel you read of leprosy; in the Epistle you read of the works of the flesh; and a sad list they are: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." And it is worth while to notice what those sins are of which the Apostle especially speaks. There are seventeen in all. He begins and he ends with those that are against the seventh commandment; six in all: because, as I have told you before now, more people will be condemned at the Last Day for breaking that commandment, than for breaking all the other commandments put together. Then he speaks of two sins which are directly against God, and break the second commandment, idolatry and witch-

craft; and the other nine are all against the sixth commandment, from the least of them, variance and emulations, down to the greatest of them, which is murder. And now, my children, think of this. What does variance mean? It does not mean an open quarrel: no, nothing so much as that; it means continual disagreements, and not being able to get on well together, as people say. And emulation means —something like this, does it not?—when one of you thinks or says, I will do that sum better than so and so, I will do that piece of sewing better than so and so, because I cannot bear to be beaten by her; not, mind you, because if she can do it so well, it is a duty that I owe to God to be able to do it equally well, but because it would make me angry to see her before me. Now when you give way to any such feelings as these, remember in what list S. Paul puts them; in the same list which holds adultery and murder.

Well, all these things are the leprosy of the soul; and you can tell me how, in one sense, you have been set free from them. In the same way, was it not, that Naaman was cured of his leprosy? He was dipped seven times in the Jordan, and it was by that Baptism of which the Jordan was a type that you have been cleansed. Therefore the question is, whether you are not ungrateful as these lepers were, in not thanking our Lord Jesus Christ for His

having then cleansed you. And how are you to thank him? You cannot now fall down before His blessed Feet; the only way you can show your thankfulness to Him is by your deeds; that is, as He has once set you free from sin, that you try to keep yourselves so; that, as He once has put you in the right way of getting to Him at last, you try to go on in that way. If not, you are even worse than these lepers. All that they did was, they neglected to thank Him: they did not try if they could become infected with the leprosy over again; they did not do all they could to provoke God to afflict them with it again. But if you are not trying in earnest to keep down all sinful thoughts and words and actions, then you are doing all you can to get back into the condition from which you were delivered at the Font.

Now what would it be, if our dear Lord, looking down this afternoon on all of you, my children, were to ask the question that He asked about the lepers? What would it be, if only one of you—what would it be, if perhaps none of you—were showing your gratitude to Him for what He has done for you, by doing in your turn what you could for Him? Remember how much worse in that case it would be for you, than if you had remained unbaptized; ay, and how much worse it is for you now, than it would have been if you had never come here. Some of you can remember when you

were not sheltered and guarded from evil as you are now: when you were in the habit of hearing wicked words, and seeing wicked deeds. And do you not think that our Lord expects you to show your gratitude to Him for having delivered you from these things? Certainly He does. I was asking you the other day, who was the best of all the kings of Judah, and you answered very truly that Hezekiah was. And yet that is a very sad thing which is written of him after he had been raised up from his disease, and had been delivered from Sennacherib, king of Assyria, that "he rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him." And how does it go on? "therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." And that does not mean any common anger of God, but great anger, great indignation, so that, because of this, God allowed that wicked king Manasseh to reign, and caused the king of Babylon to carry him and the chief men of the Jews prisoners out of their own country. Yes, if it is sad to be ungrateful to man, think how much more sad to be ungrateful to God. And to do you justice, I do not think you would be ungrateful to those who are kind to you here; you would be ashamed of yourselves, you would hate yourselves, if you could be. Take care then, lest every day you should be guilty of a sin ten times as bad, and that when God has given you so much, you should give

Him nothing at all. But I earnestly hope and pray, that all you who have been cleansed by our Lord from the leprosy of sin, may give Him the only thanks that you can give, the only thanks that he vouchsafes to receive, the doing what He commands you, the trying to please Him here, so that He may take you to live with Him for ever hereafter.

And now, &c.

READING XXVIII.*

"Then said he unto me, These waters issue out towards the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." EZEK. xlvii. 8.

I ONCE lived in an island, where there were high mountains that went towering up to the sky; and steep, narrow valleys, that divided the mountain ranges, and ran down from the very midmost of the island to the sea. Each of these valleys or ravines had its own bright stream; in summer, a little rivulet, such as you might, here and there, without much difficulty, leap across; here and there, where it grew shallower and spread itself out wider, cross by stepping-stones. But in winter they grew and increased, and became foaming rivers, deep, fierce, and terrible, roaring and rioting along their courses, and sometimes tearing up the mills which they were intended to turn, and the bridges which bestrode them. The island, I should tell you, was in the Tropics; as you know, the hottest part of this earth which God has made so wonderfully for the different needs of man. When I went there, every one thought that I was going to

* Read on the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1858.

die, that nothing could save me, unless for the one hope of this warmer climate. It pleased God to bless the air and the mountains to me; and after three years, He brought me back to England quite well. But when I first went there, I took Jacob's words on my own lips:

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth unto Thee."

So you see that, though all are bound to give what they have to God, I more than all. I only wish I did it more!

Well, as I was once walking in one of the ravines there, I thought of this story; and that if it ever pleased God to entrust me with children, I would tell it them. Now listen to it.

But first I must tell you that, on account of the heat of the climate, the gardens and cornfields and vineyards require to be watered with little streams. Accordingly, high up in the mountains they have built tiny canals here and there, into which the water flows; and then these canals branch off to such a garden, or such an olive yard, or such a plantation of bananas with their great yellow pods, or gua-

vas, which are like refreshing apples with blood-red insides: and thus the water is carried to them, and the wilderness and the solitary place is refreshed.

Now, one spring morning, when everything was bright and blue, the forest on the mountain side waving in the gentlest breeze, the birds singing their best (but the song of those birds is very poor compared to ours), the lizard basking in the sun, shining with living green and gold and jewels; a little stream was dashing down one of these ravines. Far, far below it the sea lay calm and blue: it was hurrying there, that it might be swallowed up of the ocean. Oh, what a steep descent! how it foamed and roared and hissed along! sometimes in a real waterfall, sometimes over great rocks and a pebbly beach; very, very rarely, forming a quiet little bay, green from the clearness and the depth of the water. So beautiful everything was! the mountains towered high on this side and on that: goats leapt from crag to crag: here there were bare bleak rocks, here mountain sides covered with forests: on the one side, you are reminded of "the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land;" the other seems to cry out, "O, all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord: praise Him and magnify Him for ever."

You know that water can be divided into a certain quantity of drops, but only a certain

quantity: that is, there are drops as small as possible, and which cannot be divided into smaller. Now I will tell you what some of these drops said to each other, as they came rushing and roaring down the ravine, the steep mountains on either side, the blue sea in the distance below. They were just reaching a place where one of the canals of which I have told you branched off: the proper name of such a canal is a *Levada*.

"How troublesome this is," said one of the drops, "to be hurried forward and dashed from rock to rock, and from stone to stone! Never able to stop for a single moment; on, on, it must be, always trouble, always confusion, till we get down into the sea."

"So it is, brother," said a second drop. "I quite agree with you. Only just look up to where we have come from! From the time we gushed out of the cavern where we were born, not one second's rest have we had; and, for aught I see, not one second's rest are we likely to have."

"No;" said the first: and for my part I advise that we turn off into the next levada. See, how quiet everything is there! I suppose they get into the sea at last too; but then they go down quietly without being dashed and beaten about as we are, knocked to pieces on this side and on that; they have a smooth even bed made for them, and glide down quietly and

gently, without any trouble, and without any noise."

"Well, you two may do what you like," said a third drop: "but, for my part, the road I was intended to go lies straight before me, and I am determined to go straight forward, as I was bidden at first. You talk about the levada! You do not know that it leads down into the sea after all; it is just as likely to be swallowed up in the marshes. And suppose it does: you must have noticed in some of those that we have passed, how filthy the water has become, water that once was as pure, as clear, as bright, as sparkling as we are."

And, truth to say, I never did see water so bright and diamond-like as that in those ravines. Where it gushes out of the rock, it looks when the sun shines on it as if a basketful of precious stones were being poured forth. Whether it runs swiftly along, over comparatively smooth ground, or frets and foams in the cascade, or for a moment loiters in a little pool, clear, lucid, and green as emerald; it is as clear and pure as—what shall I say? as I could wish, my children, that you might have those jewels which belong to you, your souls, clear and pure, to present to the Merchantman, Who seeks goodly pearls, when he shall ask for them at the Last Day.

"As to what you say about the levadas not flowing into the sea," said the first drop, "I do

not believe that at all. See how they keep along by our side. True, they do not hurry down quite so quickly as we do, but there is some way at the end that makes up for that, and they will get into the ocean all the same, and by a great deal easier passage."

"And as to the brightness of the water," remarked drop the second, "one cannot always help that. We must do as well as we can. If the water loses its clearness for a minute, it gains it again somehow, and that is enough for me."

"Well, do as you will," said the first drop; "here is what settles my resolution. Look, we are soon coming to a water-mill. I am not going to be dashed about in another of those mills as I was just now, I can tell you. And look, here is a levada that turns off all very conveniently. Let us decide to get into that; and oh, what a comfort it will be to have a little rest!"

My children, that puts me in mind of a true story. There was once a very holy man, who had written I know not how many volumes,—forty or fifty at the very least,—in God's service; and great, thick, closely printed volumes they were. When he was between seventy and eighty, a dear friend of his told him that he ought not to work so hard, and that he was now fairly entitled to a little rest. "Rest!" he said, "Rest! shall I not have all eternity to

rest in?" That is what I want you, dear children, and you, my Sisters, but above all, what I want myself, to feel.

But to go on with what I was telling you. "Pray, pray stop," cried the other drop, "you cannot tell where you may be going, you do not know but that——"

But while it spoke, the two that had been talking together, and a good many others, glided off into the levada, and bade farewell to their companions in whatever way drops do bid each other good-bye in. And what a difference there was in the way in which they now went on! The one tumbling and dashing from rock to rock, whirled about here, dashed into spray there, and presently caught on the great wheel of a water-mill, churned up into foam, and then sent hissing and boiling forth to pursue its rocky descent; the other gliding softly and smoothly along through a trench of squared stone: no opposition, no obstacle. But our drops, instead of the pure white pebbles over which they had rolled, now found themselves constantly sliding over green slime, and those long clammy weeds that you see palpitating in stagnant water. Ease! yes, there was ease indeed! But was it not dearly purchased by the loss of clearness and brightness? And now, too, they perceived that the levada, which had at first kept side by side with the mountain-stream, began to bend

off to the right: further and further went its course from the original torrent. And now it was clear that the levada led on to a village, and passed the middle of the narrow street. Ah! these villages are very different from ours! And presently the wanderers from the torrent found themselves mixed up with heaps of filth, exposed to all manner of uncleanness and impurity: now no longer the pure, bright stream, but dark, ill-smelling, stagnant, pestiferous water. True: no trouble and torment now, from being dashed this way and that way; it stagnated in vile, foul, fever-bearing pools and puddles. Here was a change indeed; from the glorious brightness of a mountain ravine, to the abominations of mud heaps, and decaying vegetables, and dung-hills!

Well; but we must not be too angry with our poor little drops, or wonder so much at their folly. It does seem very hard: I know it well enough for myself, and I dare say, my children, you know it also: it does seem very hard, always to have to strive and to struggle, never to be allowed a moment's rest, a moment's comfort. But then, you know, if the perpetual struggle is the only condition by which we can, as S. John says, purify ourselves even as He is pure, then I think we shall be ready, willingly to undergo it.

At last, after many an hour of lingering in this unclean hamlet, the stream found its way

out again, and, though utterly polluted, entirely abominable, it did begin to flow. "Oh, that we had never left our mountain bed!" cried one of the drops.

"Oh, how I loathe myself, and everything that is about me!" said another.

"How gladly would I suffer anything, if I could but make my way back thither!" said a third.

"Would you?" asked a long green weed that lay upon the stream. "You will have the opportunity soon enough. You are now at an immense height above the torrent you left. Before long, the levada will lead you out on the mountain-side, right above it. You will find a gap in the side of the stonework. If you boldly throw yourself through that opening, you will fall, fall, fall, many a fathom down, dashing from peak to peak, and from splinter to splinter; but you will regain the torrent at last. But if you neglect that one opportunity, the only one you will ever have, after contracting more and more filth, you will finally ooze out into the salt swamp below, and there your moisture will be exhaled by the sun, and only the filth remain behind."

"Let me but have the chance!" cried the drop.

And presently they had reached the spot. There the sluggish stream of the levada divided into two; part continued its course as before; part with a courageous bound leapt through the

broken barrier, and precipitated itself into the torrent below. What a *below* it was! Such a huge, dizzy height! Such sharp, hard-pointed rocks! For twelve or fifteen hundred feet to be battered against these, falling through the air from one awful rock to another, and then plunging into the cataract. The two drops came together to the breach.

"Whatever it cost!" cried the one, and leapt over with the leaping water.

"I dare not do it," cried the other; and glided onwards with the filthy stream.

Should I say *poor drop!* of that which had leapt? True, the stream that poured over the side was dashed into foam, churned into cream, blown about in the thin air; plunging at every fall into a new agony, but also at every fall, losing some of its impurity. And when once more the last leap brought it into the original mountain stream, with renewed life, brightness, and purity, — yes, then the purification was worth the suffering!

As for the other drop, the levada soon ended. The slow sluggish motion was over. The drop was now part of a stagnant pond, caked over with filth, where nothing but unclean and slimy water insects could dwell: a vile, putrid abomination; the noonday summer sun sucking up its vapours, and dispersing them to scatter typhus about the country. And that was the end of the Two Drops!

And now, dear children, you can explain the story for yourselves. You know that if you are to remain what God made you in Baptism, it must be by a continued effort, it must be with perpetual suffering.

You know also that if you once forsake the right path, it will be ten times more agony to enter it again. God grant that you may never fall from it! But God also grant that if you do, you may, by His grace, and at whatever cost, return again to the narrow road, and finally, like the drop in my story, be swallowed up in the ocean of Everlasting Love!

READING XXIX.*

"Behold the fowls of the air." S. MATT. vi. 26.

You know how our dear Lord often chose the things that we see around us, the fowls, the trees, the crops, the flowers, the birds, to teach us about Himself and about His Kingdom. He left us an example that we should do as He did. He tells us, in the Gospel for the day, to "behold the fowls of the air." It is September, and when I look out into the fields and gardens, and see the swallows getting themselves together and preparing for their long, long journey over the sea, I shall not be doing wrong if I tell you a story about them. My children, you asked me not to inquire why you preferred a story to a sermon; I do not mean to ask: you only wish what our Lord has shown us that those who listened to Him wished Him to do.

Now, then, let us see what we can learn from a swallow's nest, and from all that happened in it last year, in the early part, I mean, of the summer before this.

It was as lovely an evening in June as you ever saw: in one or two of the fields the hay had been cut, and was lying ready, after a day or two of sunny weather, to be carried. The

* Read the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1858.

cowslips were beginning to die off, the foxgloves were beginning to bud, the trees were at their very greenest, the flowers at their very brightest. Everything showed how beautiful a summer can be.

In the eaves of an old, old farmhouse, a swallow had built her nest of clay and earth; there she had brought up her five young ones; there they were fledged; and there they had grown up to nearly their full strength.

"It is a beautiful country, this where we are now living," said the mother-bird; "but, you know, we shall not live here always. The time will come when we shall have to cross the wide, wide sea, before we can settle down in what is really our home."

"But why can we not stay here always?" asked one of the little ones.

"Because," answered the mother, "the time will come, when all these trees that now look so beautiful, will lose their leaves; the days will grow very short and cold; all the ground will become as hard as stone, and there will be no worms to pick out of the beds, or flies to catch in the air. You cannot guess from what you have seen in your little lives, what a miserably cold, dark time winter is. You cannot tell what it will be, when all the water turns into ice, and the ground is covered with snow, and men light up great fires in their houses, and, when they go out, go out wrapped as

warmly as they can; and when a great many of the poor birds who live here all the year are starved or frozen to death.

All the little brood of birds began to look very grave, and to ask all manner of questions at once.

"How long will it be before we have to go?" said one.

"How long will it take us to get there?" asked another.

"What kind of a country is it that we have to go to?" inquired a third.

"Can none of us stay here?" asked a fourth.

"I cannot tell you," said the mother, "the exact time when we shall have to leave this land. That must depend on the weather; whether the wind is warm and the sky is unclouded, or whether the wind comes from the north, and the thick black clouds shut out the sun altogether. It may be ten days sooner or later: but some time in the autumn, when the leaves begin to turn yellow, and to fall from the trees, when the acorns begin to drop from the oak, and the hawthorn berries are quite ripe, then we shall have to go."

"And how long will it take us to go?"

"That, too, depends on how the wind blows, and on what the weather is. But we shall have to fly day and night; not over land like this, where we could rest if we are tired, but over the great water men call the sea, for a day

and a night, and perhaps part of another day, before we can come to our real home. You think these trees and flowers very beautiful; and so they are; but what will you say when you see the great trees and the bright flowers of that country! the tall palms that tower up far above the oaks and elms here, and the sweet fruits, the guavas and the bananas, and the custard apples, that are in that land. But now you see why it is I am so anxious for you to strengthen your wings, and to try how far and how fast you can fly; why I do not like your loitering in this nest, but would have you, day by day, go further and further from it. For, depend upon it, it is as much as any of us can do to cross that sea at last, and when we do come to the other side, some of us are more dead than alive, and though we have reached it, it required all our strength to get there, and we were all but exhausted by the journey."

Well, as you may easily think, the little birds for some time thought and talked a good deal about what their mother had told them. They often wondered, as the long, long days of summer came on, how there could be any country more beautiful than this. When they had tried their wings for a longer time than usual and felt tired, they were sometimes afraid that their strength would never hold out; and they would sometimes try to fancy that unknown land; what it was, what kind of creatures lived there,

and what trees they could be that were so much more beautiful than these. But as July came on, and the weather grew warmer and warmer, one or two of them (foolish little birds) began to doubt whether it could be as their mother said. "She talked," said one, "of the air getting cold, and the days becoming shorter. I am sure that it is a great deal warmer than it was when she spoke to us."

"I do think," said one of the others, "that the days are a little shorter."

"I don't see that," said the first, "but I am quite sure that it is hotter."

"However that may be," said the youngest, whom we may call Tiny, "I believe what our mother said; and I try every day harder and harder to prepare myself for our journey."

"You, Tiny!" cried the others, "such a poor little weak thing as you, you will never be able to pass that great sea, whoever else can!"

"I will do my best," said Tiny, "and I hope after all to see that beautiful country, some day, of which my mother is so fond."

July passed away: and still the hot weather continued, and though the days did shorten a little, it was nothing to speak of. But as August went on, the little birds were astonished to see some of the leaves, as those on the willow, turning yellow. And though the days were very hot, there was a chilliness in the evenings, and a heaviness in the dew, that they

had never known before. And toward the end of August, the sun began to set very much sooner; and they could almost see a difference in his time of setting every evening. And now sometimes, the old birds began to hold a council which the young ones were not allowed to attend; and at last the mother of our little brood told them that it would not be so very long before they had to leave this land.

All of them felt very uncomfortable, and they began to feel sadder and sadder, when the next two or three days were darker and wetter than any they had yet seen.

The eldest of the whole brood had been the most backward in trying its strength. Its mother had often warned it, that unless it would practise now, it never would have any chance of crossing the sea. But, for all that, it had led a sadly idle life, only exercising itself just as much as it was necessary to get a living, and then resting. The one next to it, the strongest of the whole brood, delighted in proving its strength, but never could believe the stories of the long nights and the cold days which the old birds told.

At last, all the trees began to turn yellow, the leaves fell from the walnut and the lime and the willow; every rough breeze swept down hundreds of beech-nuts, and chestnuts; the wheat-sheaves were long ago safely housed in the barns; and the days and nights were nearly

equal. One fine evening, the mother of these little birds called them together again, and said: "In a very few hours the time will come that is fixed for our departure. When once we have left the land, I shall be able to do nothing more to help you till we reach that other country. Every one of you will have to take care of yourselves. Only keep as near as you can to me; or if you are separated from me, then keep close to the band of swallows with whom we shall go: else you will miss your way, and never reach the beautiful country that I have so often told you of. In the meantime you must keep close to the nest, that whenever the notice is given, we may all be ready to obey it."

Two evenings after this, about an hour before sun-setting, an old and very swift swallow went flying round to all the eaves of the farms, and old houses near, and appointed them to meet on a certain hill (one of that range of hills that we see when looking to the south), and by the spire of the church there at sunset. So they took their last meal, and by the time appointed were on the wing; but with very different feelings. The eldest bird, who had never exercised himself, began to doubt whether he could ever bear the fatigue: the second would rather have stayed in his old familiar woods, and skimmed round the old well-known buildings: Tiny, a weak little bird after all,

was terribly afraid of the distance, but resolved to do her best.

As the sun set, they met by hundreds and hundreds round the spire. Presently the signal was given, and all the birds set off for the south. And as they passed many and many a little village, they were joined by fresh hosts of birds ; so that when they first came in sight of the sea, instead of hundreds they might have been reckoned by tens of thousands.

When they first came in sight of the sea! Ah, then it was that the courage of the eldest bird utterly failed. When he saw nothing before him but the broad, broad water, and found that the army of his companions were still winging their way towards it, he resolved to take his chance and remain behind.

There was no time for a long consultation then. The season of preparation and advice was over. Those that were ready must make the effort at once ; those that were not ready had now no hope. It was in vain that his mother, and the rest of his little family, tried to urge him on ; stay he would, and stay he did. There were a few sunny days, in which he could still enjoy himself in his old haunts. But then came clouds thicker, and rain heavier than ever. Three or four weeks of misery : the recollection of his companions now safely at home in that sunny and beautiful country ; and then one night of sharp frost, put an end

for ever to the sufferings and sorrows of the poor bird.

But as for the rest. As they passed over France, still fresh and fresh hundreds joined themselves to the huge army. And when they were fairly over the Atlantic Ocean, swiftly as they flew, and wide as they stretched out, it took half an hour for the whole body to pass any one spot. All that night, and all the next day, they went southward, southward still; but towards the evening, just as the sun was about to sink into the purple ocean (oh, how purple it is out there, at such a distance from land!), Tiny, who had all this while kept close to her mother, said that her strength was failing. The poor mother tried to comfort and support her as well as she could; but they flew slower and slower; and the great multitudes of birds were passing before them. At last, just as Tiny's strength was about to fail, far below them they beheld a ship.

"I will keep with you my child," said the mother: "it is not the first time I have rested on the houses which men build upon the seas."

And in another minute they were resting on its mast. The sailors, as they always do, strewed bread-crumbs on the deck, left a wide space for the weary birds, and did everything they could to make them welcome. So they ate and were refreshed: while all that night the

ship was bearing them towards the land whither they were going.

And a stormy night it was: and among the hundreds that perished in the tempest was that one of our little birds, who had most trusted in his strength, and had feared nothing at first setting forth.

The rest of a night and a fine morning sent forth our two birds, Tiny and her mother, on their way, and brought them to their home.

And now you have seen the lesson that they teach us. We, like them, belong to a better country than this: we, like them, but for our own fault, shall return thither: we know not the exact time, but we know that there is a certain time beyond which we cannot linger. The ocean, across which none, save God Himself, can help us, is death. And so, my children, the next time you see those swallows preparing, as you may see them now, for their autumn journey, think whether you are preparing for yours. You have every help now which can assist you in your preparation. God grant you so to use them, that when the time shall come, however terrible that passage must be to every one, it may, nevertheless, be safe to you, and blessed, beyond the power of words to speak, in its ending!

READING XXX.*

"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." S. Luke xii. 48.

The other day, two travellers were crossing one of the passes in the Alps, where the snow lay deep and thick, and where all round there were wild crags and precipices—a bitterly cold and lonely path. And they asked their guide whether there was any danger on the pass. You are to understand that such a pass is a narrow, steep descent between two precipices, the snow which covers it hard frozen on the top; you sit down and allow yourself to slide forward, and you go with the speed of a railway to the bottom of the hill. But often this snow only hides what are called *crevasses* — deep, fearful gulfs; and it is the guide's business to know where these crevasses are, and whether the snow is strong enough to make a firm bridge. So, as I said, these two travellers said to the guide, "Is there danger?" and he answered "No." Then they began to slide forward; when all at once one of them, who was a clergyman, cried out, "God have mercy on my soul!" and they saw him

* Read to the Orphans of S. Margaret's Orphanage, the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1860.

disappear through the snow. Very carefully the others came round where he had fallen; they called to him, they shouted, but they could hear, as out of a well, only three or four dismal groans. In the course of hours they got ropes, and let a man down, and then the body of this Priest was found, dashed to pieces, ninety feet down. He had not one moment to make his peace with God: he went into eternity without the warning of a second!

Well, was that guide who said, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace;" who said that the road was safe, when it was horribly dangerous; kind or cruel? They had set their minds on going that way; but was he kind because he said, You may go safely? Suppose he had answered, You must not go for all the world: I dare say they would have thought, How tiresome! But would he have been unkind for all that. You know better.

Now, my children, who are like those travellers, gliding forward over the snow, not well knowing in themselves whether the journey were safe or unsafe? And who is like the guide, whose business it was to warn them of danger, and to advise them how best to travel?

Have you not all a difficult and dangerous journey to take; and the name of that journey is called Life? Do you not hang every moment over death? Can any one tell when her hour

will come? And after death, is there not the Judgment? Might not any one of you,—if you were living carelessly, without one thought of God, without any one desire even to love that dear Lord Who so loved you as to die for you, —meet with some sudden accident, fall into some sudden illness; and wake up only to say, The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved?

Well, and who are like the guide? (I hope no like this particular guide, but like true guides, having the same duties that he ought to have done.) Why, all who are over you in any way. The Mother, the Sisters, I myself, and any one whom the Mother and Sisters set over you. And woe to us if we see you going wrong, and do not tell you, warn you, punish you, if needs be! Any one of us who sees you doing wrong and allows it: might hinder it and will not; might *try* to hinder it and will not: how shall we ever be able to answer for this at the dreadful Judgment-seat of Christ?

Oh yes; it is a great deal easier, it makes one far more comfortable, never to find fault; it is so much happier a thing to praise than to blame. I, for one, never find fault with you without its costing me a great deal. But what if God were to say to me that which he said to Eli?

"In that day will I perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his

house: when I begin I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

And I think that what I need most especially to say to you is the very thing which the text says: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." My children, you do not remember this enough. Just see how you are fenced in from doing many and many a wrong thing. No care of ours can keep you altogether (I know it too sadly) from outward temptations. I will never turn this place into a prison; and unless I were to bolt and bar you in, I never could keep you from all intercourse with those who would lead you into sin. But you are preserved to a very great degree from harm.

And you are taught a very great deal about our dear Lord; some of you, at all events, as you answer here, Sunday after Sunday. So that as far as head-knowledge is concerned, you have learnt much. And what does all this show?

Why, it shows that you always have to keep the text in mind: "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." When you hereafter come to stand before the Judgment-seat of God, do you think that much or little will be required of you? And if *much*, do

you think that you are acting up to that belief: that you are trying so to do good, so to be obedient, kind, gentle, true, reverent to God, and the things of God, as they should be who have your privileges?

I have spoken of four things. Let me see.

Obedient. We often, you know, have ladies staying for a week or so here. Do you think it is likely that, when they went away, they should say,—Of all the obedient children I ever saw, yours are the most so? And yet, ought you not to be so? Who was He that set the great example of obedience? Was it not that dear Lord Whom you all profess to follow? and Whom some of you, I do believe, are trying to follow.

Kind. Well; and there I may say truly that you do please me much. I think you are very fairly kind to each other, and very kind to the little ones. This is one thing which gives me great pleasure when I think of you.

True. My children, I dare not speak with any certainty about this, but yet many things make me hope the best. I never like to threaten. I never like to remind you where all liars will have their portion; in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. I would far rather say, Think of that Lord Who is the God of Truth. You say you love Him, you say you wish to be like Him. Think of those Martyrs who died for the Truth, whom you also love, whose deeds may well make our hearts burn

within us. They died, rather than be false. And we—what possible temptation can we have to a lie, that, remembering them, we ought not at once to trample into dust?

And then I said, *reverent*.

What do I mean by reverent?

I mean, that when you come into God's House, or are engaged in God's service, you should show that you remember Whose House you are entering, and in Whose service you are taking a part.

Do you do that?

Now remember: it will be no excuse to you that others were as bad or worse, that others encouraged you to do ill. When you rush into this place, when you rush away from it, as if you were coming into a play-ground rather than God's Own House; a House of which it might be said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!" will God excuse you hereafter, because the fault was so common here? My children, you know better. You have a better feeling in you. You are capable of better things. Nay, I am willing to believe that half the fault arises from carelessness. But I do trust that I never shall have the pain again of hearing my children do what you did, not many hours since. I believe you are earnestly sorry; but sorrow can never bring back the past.

Nothing can bring back that. But the future; that is still in your power: and will you not try? I think you do sometimes. I can only hope that you may always.

And now, &c.

READING XXXI.*

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." GAL. ii. 20.

I DARE SAY you have often been disposed to think that these chapters of the Galatians are very hard to be understood; and perhaps they may seem to you rather uninteresting, and a repetition of the same thing over and over again. Well: they are not easy in themselves; but we make them much harder, because we read them in such short chapters. If I were telling a story, however interesting it might be in itself, if you came in when I had been going on for half-an-hour, stayed five minutes, and then went out again, you would be likely, to use the common expression, to make neither head nor tail of what I was saying, and to think it very dull. Now S. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is one continued argument; and if we take a little bit out of the middle, and read that by itself, though we may pick up three or four verses here and there, we shall hardly be likely to understand the whole drift of what the Apostle is saying; nay, perhaps, we may understand the very opposite of what he meant

* Preached at the Orphanage, October 16, 1859.

us to understand. And this difficulty is as old as the time of S. Peter, who says that in S. Paul's Epistles "are some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

Now I am not going to enter into this Epistle, so as to explain to you S. Paul's reason for writing it, or to show you what his argument is; I will only tell you that in reading it, and the former part of the Epistle to the Romans, you must always remember two things. The one: that wherever the Apostle speaks of the *Law*, he does not mean the Law of God,—that Law, according to which we have to walk here, that Law according to which we have to be judged hereafter: no; he always means the Jewish Law. And the other: that when he speaks of *Faith*, he does not mean that which we generally now call faith, the believing in God's Word, because it is his Word: no; he means the Christian Law: or if you like it better, the Gospel. Almost always when he uses the word *Faith*, you would understand more clearly what he means if it were now translated *the Gospel*. So, in the beginning of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which many people have written so much that is untrue about, it only means: "Therefore, being justified,"—that is, made righteous, by the Gospel, that is, by the way the Gospel points

out, namely, our dear Lord's passion — "we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And so in a great many other places.

Now, let us see the meaning of the text I read you just now. It begins: "I am crucified with Christ." How is that? Why, you must remember how fond S. Paul is of telling us what we all know so sadly in ourselves, that we have, so to speak, two selves, two I's: the old bad self which we get from Adam, and which he calls the old man; the new better self which is given us at Baptism, which he calls the new man:—the old bad I, which says, when we are offended, "I will be angry, I will revenge myself; I think it is a glorious thing to have my own way; I will hate such an one, because he or she has spited me;" (My children, do you think I have never heard anything of this bad, this troublesome self among you?)—and the better self, which says, "I will forgive, because Christ forgave; I will not revenge myself because He, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." There is the old bad self, which says, "I will not learn this lesson; I will not do this task, because it is so much trouble; I will take my ease and enjoy myself instead;" and there is the better I, the I in which the Holy Ghost speaks, which says, "But I *will* take pains about it, because my dear Lord laboured when He was on earth; because this is what He

meant by taking up the Cross and following Him; because he has promised that, if I suffer here, I shall reign hereafter." Have you not felt those two selves sometimes as plainly striving within you, as if they were two different persons? I know you have; I have often; the Sisters have often; no one who is now in the Kingdom of Heaven but has often; ay, and those unhappy ones who departed out of this world out of the grace of God, they know what the struggle was; but sadly, sadly they fought in it, and allowed the worse self to be conqueror over the better. That is the great happiness of those that die in the Lord: that henceforth there is no more this constant struggle between the two selves.

There is a story which I should like you to read, which represents three children setting out on a pilgrimage to the Heavenly City. But with them, wherever they go, goes a troublesome, wicked, mischievous companion, called Inbred Sin—"the old man" of S. Paul; and yet sometimes he is so pleasant and so droll, that though they know he is trying to do all he can to hinder their ever getting to the Heavenly City, they cannot help liking him. Many a trick he plays them: many and many a time he leads them out of the way. But at last, when they come to the Black River that has no bridge, and that flows between them and the Heavenly Land, then how Inbred Sin shrinks

back from it! how he shrieks and groans, and cries out! And behold, when they have got through, and come forth on the other side, he has been drowned in the river, and they have done with him for ever.

Well; and this is what S. Paul means here: "I am crucified with Christ." As our Lord was nailed to the Cross, which is a slow, lingering, painful death, but a very certain death: so our old nature, our troublesome self, our Inbred Sin, was nailed to the Cross at our Baptism; and all we have to do is to keep him there. That is, he then received his death-wound; and because he is a part of ourselves, we feel all the pain, the lingering pain of his destruction: but destroyed he will be, at the very moment when we give up our last breath. In the mean time he sometimes struggles very hard; often contrives to do some mischief: but only by our own fault can he really hurt us. I have seen a picture of the Crucifixion, in which the wicked thief, struggling and wrestling to get free, has torn one of his hands from the cross; and something like this our evil nature will sometimes do. But this is what S. Paul means when he says,—I, that is the worse I, the sinful I, am crucified with Christ.

And he immediately goes on: "nevertheless I live." Ah! here he is speaking of the better *I* which came at our Baptism. This does indeed live and thrive and prosper, the more we

keep under the old man, the Inbred Sin of our nature. The two cannot get on together. Do you know how young cuckoos are born? The cuckoo never builds a nest of her own: she drops her egg into some other bird's nest, generally a sparrow's; and when it is hatched, the young cuckoo, being so much larger and stronger, contrives to get to itself the worms that the mother bird brings, and so starves her young ones. Sometimes, too, he turns the true young ones, one after another, out of the nest, and so gets all the food to himself. But sometimes these young ones, seeing that if they do not get rid of the cuckoo he will get rid of them, make a great effort, and heave him over the nest; and then he falls down, and dies on the ground beneath the tree. This is just like our two natures: one must kill the other. Well, then: I—that is the worse, the sinful I—am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I—that is the better I, the I that came of Baptism—live.

But just as we think we understand this very plainly, we hear something to make it more difficult: "nevertheless I live, yet *not* I, but Christ liveth in me." Ah! and how is that? Why, take the same example again: and we may take it the more boldly, because you know our dear Lord Himself says, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" When those young spar-

rows have pushed the cuckoo out of their nest, they live; yet they do not live of themselves; they could not live unless the mother-bird brought them worms or crumbs, or what else she can find for them, every quarter of an hour. So, unless our Lord helped our better selves to keep alive, to do His will, to do what of our old nature we hate, to leave undone what of our old nature we love, we never could get on for a moment. I will tell you a very good type of this in the Old Testament. You remember, that when the ark was in the land of the Philistines, and wherever it was taken, there emerods, that is, dangerous boils, broke out on all the people, the soothsayers told the lords of the Philistines to get a new cart, to put the ark there, to harness two milch kine, that is, cows that were giving milk to their calves, to the cart, to shut up their calves at home, and then to see if they went up by the way that led to the land of Israel. If they did, then they would allow that it was the God of Israel that afflicted them; if not, it was a chance that happened to them. Well, they did so; and the cows went along to Bethshemesh, the first city in Judah, and it is especially said, "lowing as they went." They lowed, because they felt the grief and pain of leaving their calves behind; but still they went on. Now these cows are types of us. They had to come up from where to where? From the land of the Philistines to the land of Israel.

Where have we to go? We have to leave this world, of which the land of the Philistines was a type; and we seek, as S. Paul says, a better country, that is, a heavenly, of which the land of the Jews was a type. But we do not leave it easily; we have our own pleasures and favourite sins, and things which God calls us to give up, if we desire to serve Him; and if we do go on in our way, it is as these kine went, that lowed as they went. We go on, every now and then desiring to turn back; every now and then feeling how hard it is to serve God, every now and then feeling the pain of that being crucified with Christ of which I have been speaking.

And now, my children, God says to you, what Jehu said to the people in the palace of Jezreel, "Who is on my side, who?" And I hope you will all try to give the same answer. This is now becoming so large an Orphanage that by it God must either be greatly honoured or greatly dishonoured. There are more than twice as many as there were when first you came here; and almost every week now is adding to your numbers. Therefore I, therefore we all, have the more occasion to pray for you. But our prayers will not do without your own. Try, then, in the changes which you are going to have, a larger house, more room in every way, more companions; try to make this the chief change, that you may each and all now try to serve God ten times better than ever before!

READING XXXII.*

"Such honour have all His Saints." Ps. cxlix. 9.

WHERE is this written? and what is the honour? *Such* honour; such honour as *what?*

The day reminds me to speak to you, my children, of this; and if the day did not, the very change made with respect to you would.

What is the meaning of that change, and its use? To remind you that you have been Confirmed; that is, strengthened with the strength by which the Saints became what they were; armed for the battle, which they, in their days, fought; and that you are looking forward, or ought to be, for the honour they have.

And yet, the world so hates God and His Saints, that, as you know even now, and will know better some of these days, it uses the word *Saint* as a word of reproach. "Oh, you must be a Saint! Are you setting up for one of the Saints?"

Hereafter, when you are in service, if you stand up for God's glory by trying to keep the Fourth Commandment, when others break it; and go to Church when perhaps others pretend to go, and use the time in their own amusements, or worse: would you not be called a

* Preached on All Saints' Day, 1860.

Saint? If you kept the Fifth Commandment by refusing to join in talk against your master and mistress, by doing exactly what they desired, even though it seemed, ay, even though it were, useless and fidgety, would you not be called a Saint? If you kept the Sixth, by forgiving the wrong done, would you not be called a Saint for being mean-spirited? If you kept the Seventh, by stopping your ears against impure conversation, turning your eyes from unseemly books or pictures, showing by your whole manner of behaviour how the least liberty offended you, would you not be called a Saint for being strait-laced? If you kept the Eighth Commandment, by having nothing to do with the underhand little pilfering ways that go on in so many kitchens, would you not be called a Saint for being so particular?

"Such honour have all His Saints." And the honour, you see, in your case, would be that of hard words to be heard, and ridicule to be endured. But yet that is an honour for Christ's sake also; and so I hope you would all of you try to feel it, if it pleased God that it should come to you. That is the beauty of this word *such* in the Psalm; it leaves it so very uncertain what particular kind of honour it may be to each. Think first of the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the Throne, and before the

Lamb, whom this day we keep in mind; how one star even among them differeth from another star in glory; how even in the highest of all their ranks, that of the Martyrs, there is a marvellous difference in the beauty of the Crown which they wear; how much more is there a difference between those who have laid down their lives for our Lord, and those who have suffered torture or imprisonment for His sake, and those that have not been called to any other sufferings than that which we all must have through the struggle which always must go on between our worse and our better nature? Daniel told you so: "They that be wise," that is, truly wise, God's own servants, "shall shine as the firmament;" but, which is a much greater deed, "they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." You have seen what we call the milky way, at night, that band of pale light which stretches right across the sky; that is what Daniel means by the brightness of the firmament: then think how much brighter even a very little star is than this: much more, one of those larger ones like the morning or evening star, or the dog star, that sparkles so beautifully with all manner of colours.

It is very true, my children, that I pray for you, as I would for myself, that you may not be led into temptation; and never, if I knew of it, should you go from here to any place where

you would be exposed to more than needs must be the case in this miserable and naughty world. Only remember this, that if a great temptation does come: "Such honour have all His Saints;" the greater glory in resisting it.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." And call to mind that the temptations we all have, one after another, make altogether the ladder by which God intends us to get to heaven; just as you set your feet on the rundles of a ladder, and trample them down, so to speak, thus it is with temptations, as in their turn you have to meet them. It was the way that our dear Lord Himself ascended to His Father and our Father, to his God and our God; and there is no other way for you or for me, or for any one else. And so every Saint among the millions of whom this day speaks would also tell you: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of life." And think, my children, of this; it is not as if when you yielded to a temptation, you yielded once for all, and then an end. No one can say how long the poison of it lies hid within you, and when it will break out and fester. I will tell you a story which happened about a fortnight ago. A man who wished to buy a handsome ring, went into a jeweller's at Paris and desired to see some. The jeweller showed him a very ancient gold ring, remarkably fine, and curious

on this account, that, on the inside of it, were two little lion's claws. The buyer, while looking at the others, was playing with this; at last he purchased another, and went away. But he had scarcely reached home, when first his hand, then his side, then his whole body became numb, and without feeling, as if he had had a stroke of the palsy; and it grew worse and worse, till the physician, who came in haste, thought him dying. "You must somehow have taken poison," he said. The sick man protested that he had not. At length, some one remembered this ring; and it was then discovered to be what used to be called a death ring, and which was often employed in those wicked Italian States three or four hundred years ago. If a man hated another, and desired to murder him, he would present him with one of them; in the inside was a drop of deadly poison, and a very small hole, out of which it would not make its way, except it was squeezed. When the poor man was wearing it, the murderer would come and shake his hand violently, the lion's claw would give his finger a little scratch, and in a few hours he was a dead man! Now see why I told you this story. For four hundred years this ring had kept its poison, and at the end of that time it was strong enough almost to kill the man who had unintentionally scratched his finger with the claw; for he was only saved by

great skill on the part of the physician, and by the strongest medicines. I thought when I read that story, how like this poison was to sin. You may commit a sin now, and for the present forget it; and perhaps ten or twelve years hence, the wound you then, so to speak, gave yourself, may break out again, and that more dangerously than ever. And the greatest danger of all is, lest the thoughts of sins we have committed, and the pleasure we had in committing them, should come back upon us in the hour of death.

"Such honour have all His Saints." Well, my children; and to show that you intend to strive after this honour, and to help you in striving for it, you are now going to receive that which in Itself is all strength, all purity, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And God grant that you may so receive It, as that this All Saints' Day may be a new starting-point for all of you; forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. And I could not end with a better prayer than that: "Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting."

And now, &c.

READING XXXIII.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."
S. JOHN vi. 12.

WHO is it that says this? Is it some poor widow, like her whom our dear Lord saw by the treasury, who had hard work, as we say, to make both ends meet; who had to save all that she could, and after all knew what it was to be in want and in hunger, over and over again? Or was it some beggar, like Lazarus, laid at the rich man's gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table? You all know better. It is our Lord Himself: He Who says, "All the beasts of the forest are Mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I be hungry, I will not tell thee; for the whole world is Mine." And He said it, too, just after He had multiplied the five loaves and the two poor little fishes, so as to suffice for five thousand men, besides women and children: probably ten thousand in all.

Why did He say this? Because He would teach you, my children, a great lesson, the sin of waste. Now, if it pleases God that you ever go out into service, this is a lesson which I hope you will have learnt long before. It is

bad enough to waste anything of our own, but to waste another's property is still worse. You must begin by praying and trying now against waste, and the habit of carefulness will not have to be formed then.

And why is it wrong to waste? For this reason: nothing that we have in this world is our own. If God gives us money, health, strength, power of any kind, He does not give it us to belong to ourselves, to be, as children say, our *very own;* but He gives it to us as to stewards. It belongs to Him, and we are to make the most use we can of it for His honour and glory. If we waste, we are wasting God's property, not our own; and God will exact an account of it from us at the Last Day.

And now, my children, let us think what it is that you are most in danger of wasting. Money you have not got; earthly possessions you have not got. But there is one thing you all have, you as much as I; and which is one of the most valuable gifts that God can give us. What can it be? You have had it from the very beginning; you will have it to the very end of your lives. God expects you to make the very most of it; and woe be to those that do not!

It is *time.*

Now it is wonderful to see how, of two children who both have the same lessons, the same business, the same play in the day, one

will find the means of obeying S. Paul's injunction "to redeem *the time*," and the other will not. What is it to redeem the time? It is to catch up, and to make the most of, little fragments of time, which we might otherwise lose; to lay hold of this five minutes in the morning, and this minute and a half in the noonday, and that three minutes in the evening, which others dawdle away, and which if they do not spend in mischief, at least they spend in no good. Now look back, dear children, to this morning, and see how far you have *not* gathered up the fragments that remained.

You were called at a certain time: did you jump up at once, or did you continue to lie in bed thinking how comfortable you were, and what a hard, sad thing it was to have to get up so early? Then, in dressing, did you dawdle over this and that, or did you dress as quickly as you could, and so redeem that time for other things? Then, in your lessons, if you had anything to learn by heart, did you keep steadily at it till you had finished it? If you were doing arithmetic, did you keep on with the sum, not letting your thoughts go to the ends of the world, but remembering that, every figure you set down, you were really and truly doing God's work? If you were engaged in house-work, did you remember that text, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with

thy might?" *Whatsoever*, Solomon says: if it be sweeping or scouring a room, that is to be done with all your might, that is to be done heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, that is to be done, redeeming the time, because the days are evil: even here also, "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

I always wish you to remember those verses of a poem that perhaps you know:

> "As long as life's journey shall have to be trod,
> No duty can ever be mean;
> The factory girl can do work for her God,
> As well as a king or a queen."

My dear children, I am afraid that in that fearful Day of Judgment we shall be amazed and confounded at the hours and days, made up of poor little broken minutes, which we have thrown away and allowed to be lost. We should be afraid and ashamed to say at the beginning of the day, "Now this day I mean to do nothing at all: actually nothing. I shall neither play nor work, I shall be purely and entirely idle." But we are not afraid and ashamed to waste a few minutes here, and a few minutes there, over and over again, till they would make, not one day only, but a great, great many days!

Now, you know, Lent is more than half over. Let us see how we can gather up the

fragments of that. It is but a poor, broken piece that we have now; but let us see how much we can make of it. And no one must be discouraged because they have done so much less than they had hoped to do by this time. First, we lose time, or go wrong through idleness or yielding to some temptation; and then we are apt to lose more time, or go still further wrong by being discouraged or dismayed about it.

And now think of this. The more use we make of what God gives us, the more we shall receive from Him. Whatever it is: grace of whatever kind, a talent of whatever sort, if we waste it, we must expect to have it taken away from us altogether. The servant in the parable that had had the one talent, not only did not have a city given to him as the others had, but his poor one talent which he had misused, was actually taken away from him.

And remember, it is not only time that we must gather up; but every opportunity that God gives us of doing good to others, or of benefiting ourselves. If any of you, my children, ever have the opportunity of doing a kind action for any of your playfellows; never mind how little, if it were only the threading a needle, that is gathering up the fragments. If you have the opportunity of learning something that you did not know before, and listen attentively, and make the most of your chance,

that is gathering up the fragments. I am going to teach you something when we go out of the Oratory: now, if you attend to what I tell you, so as to remember it, that will be gathering up the fragments that remain.

And why are you bound to gather up these fragments always? Why are you bound to make the most of your time, power, strength, everything, in God's service? Ah, my children! you know why well enough. Because our dear Lord, while He was in this world, worked night and day for you: rose early, and so late took rest, and ate the bread of carefulness: spent whole nights in prayer on the cold mountains for you: rose up a long while before it was day, and went forth to pray for you: and because He bore and did everything for you, He expects you to make the best use of your time for Him. Oh, that it may be so! that I may always hear of you as diligent children, so that the prophecy may be fulfilled, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." I do not mean with earthly riches, but with those riches which are indeed worth having; where neither can moth consume, nor thief destroy!

And for you, too, my Sisters, oh that you also may now labour to gather up the remainder of this Lent for that beloved Lord! Oh that every one of these eighteen days may see you more and more earnest in prayer, more and

more true-hearted in self-denial, more and more preparing yourselves for the Easter, in which I try to see for you the type of the eternal Marriage-feast in the Kingdom of our Lord

And now, &c.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
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